

Ph. D. Thesis.  
Faculty of Arts,  
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"THE LIFE OF JAMES SHARP,

ARCHBISHOP OF ST. ANDREWS".

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## Summary of the Thesis on

### James Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews.

#### 1. Birth, education and early life.

James Sharp was born at Banff Castle, 4th May, 1618, of good parents. He was educated at the local school before going to King's College, Aberdeen, where he was influenced by the celebrated "Aberdeen Doctors" under whom he studied theology after graduation. Sharp fled south to Oxford at the time of the Covenant, 1638. Ill-health prevented him from entering the Episcopal Church as a minister. After his return to Scotland, contact with Rothes secured for Sharp the Chair of Philosophy at St. Andrews where he was an undoubted success.

#### 2. Ministry at Crail.

The Earl of Crawford secured Sharp's appointment to the parish of Crail where he was inducted after passing all the tests with the approval of the Presbytery on 27th January, 1648. Sharp now began to play an increasing part in the councils of the Church of Scotland and received a pressing call to an Edinburgh Church - an invitation he was prevented from accepting by Cromwell's invasion. When the split occurred in the Presbyterian Church Sharp joined the more tolerant group, the "Resolutioners", and was captured at Angus. He was imprisoned for some months in the "Tower" and after his release was chosen to put the Resolutioners' case before Cromwell in 1656. His success on this occasion met with the approval of the General Assembly and led to his choice as delegate when the situation again worsened in 1659. In 1653 Sharp married Helen Moncrieff of Randerston.

#### 3. Sharp's Third Mission.

James Sharp was called in to help Monck after Cromwell's resignation and was for the third time appointed as special envoy to defend the Resolutioners' case in London, early in 1660. Religious opinion, even in Scotland, underwent change at this time - a new generation had grown up that found the Presbyterian restrictions irksome and turned hopefully towards Episcopacy. Plans for the Restoration were afoot and the leading Resolutioners stood for a royal return on the basis of the Covenant. Sharp, aware of the trend toward Episcopacy, felt that such a narrow sectarian basis was inadvisable and repeatedly said so. He asked to be relieved of his post in London but was asked to continue. Sharp did useful work with Monck and in March, 1660, he was invited to confer with the Irish Presbyterians regarding future co-operation between the two Churches.



#### 4. Sharp's Mission to Breda.

The Resolutioners now began to grow anxious about the Restoration settlement but nothing was said about Scotland in the Declaration of Breda. Sharp, still busy in London trying to reconcile the divergent parties, warned his party of the Episcopal leanings of the Scottish nobility. Douglas pressed Sharp to undertake an embassy to Holland but Monck dispatched him on private mission before detailed instructions arrived from Scotland. This mission had some political significance though Sharp declared that he would not be accessory to anything prejudicial to the Presbyterian interest. Sharp was much impressed by the King whom he tried to persuade to adopt moderation. He reported to his brethren that Charles was willing to restore settled government of the Scottish Church. Sharp was now a confirmed royalist.

#### 5. The Restoration.

The Restoration was popular and celebrations universal. Sharp was a constant visitor at court where the Scottish nobles sided with the King for Episcopacy. Sharp warned his brethren of the general antipathy towards Presbytery; "the moderate Presbyterians", he wrote, "are content with moderate Episcopacy". He declared himself no longer able to help the Presbyterian cause and asked for his recall, urging Douglas to take his place, but Douglas declined. Sharp was now in a dilemma - was he to support Presbyterianism or Episcopacy? The latter held out prospects of preferment, but Sharp was still loyal. Douglas now urged Sharp to press the case for the Covenant before Charles but Sharp pursued a policy of non-intervention. By midsummer Episcopacy was restored in England and the question of the Scottish Church was again in the forefront. Gillespie offered help in restoring Episcopacy in Scotland. Sharp again warned his friends that "the gale is like to blow for the Prelatic party" and refused openly to carry out Douglas's instructions. Lauderdale was now appointed Secretary for Scotland.

#### 6. The King's Letter.

On 1st September, 1660, Sharp presented the royal letter to the Edinburgh Assembly and received hearty thanks for his services. The letter declared the royal resolve "to settle, protect and preserve the government of the Church of Scotland as it is settled by law". The ambiguity of the letter was ignored at the time. Sharp now sought to win the favour of Lauderdale and adopted a strong line against the Protestors, urging greater severity - he had learned from experience that moderation was regarded as a sign of weakness. As news leaked out of Sharp's share in the drafting of the royal letter, suspicion grew - Sharp maintaining that he had done nothing prejudicial to the King's interest. He was still ready to support Presbyterianism, were there any chance of success, but his appointment as royal chaplain set tongues wagging.



## 7. The Restoration of Episcopacy in Scotland.

Middleton took up residence at Holyrood on Hogmanay, 1660, and Parliament opened next day after Sharp had preached a sermon urging loyalty to the King. Sharp confessed that he "now began to see a trial coming upon this Church". The Oath of Allegiance was followed by the Recissory Act (28/3/1661) which destroyed the legal foundation of the Presbyterian Church. This royal declaration, framed on Sharp's advice, led the Resolutioners to regard Sharp as a traitor although he still concealed his defection. He was actively associated with Middleton in securing the restoration of Episcopacy which was declared the official state religion of Scotland after Sharp's return from London.

## 8. Sharp's "volte face".

Sharp now declared his support for royal authority in matters ecclesiastical and was called to task by the Resolutioners. He attempted in vain to win over the leading men in the Resolutioner party, including Douglas, to the new Church in which Sharp was elevated to the Archbishopric of St. Andrews. He was consecrated along with Leighton, Fairfoul and Hamilton in London on 15th December, 1661, and received a great welcome on his return to Scotland... an indication that Episcopacy was not unpopular with the Scots as a whole and not condemned by the bulk of the clergy. (Only 40 out of 600 ministers opposed Prelacy and 10 of the new bishops were Resolutioners!) Sharp's defection not surprising in view of his upbringing, training and right-wing tendencies. He was not a "knave pur sang" but genuinely anxious to help the cause of religion in Scotland. He believed that the suspension of Episcopacy had led to disorder, that the Kirk had lost power and the pulpits had become vehicles for political propaganda. To Sharp, Episcopacy meant the restoration of order and the revival of ecclesiastical influence in the state. Again, he realised that Presbyterian restrictions and rigidity were unpopular, especially with the nobles, and that the mass of the people were indifferent to the form of church government - only extremists opposed the change. Sharp was an ecclesiastical administrator rather than a devout evangelist, and Episcopacy gave him scope for his undoubted talents. He was also ambitious but neither wicked nor treacherous. He supported Presbyterianism till that cause seemed hopeless. His greatest condemnation is not that he accepted the Primacy but that, having gained power, he failed to build up a strong unified church free from political-mongering.

## 9. Sharp the Archbishop.

With the backing of the King, Clarendon and Lauderdale, Sharp now began the serious restoration of Episcopacy in Scotland. All meetings of presbyteries, synods and sessions were banned until authorised by the bishops. The rest of the Scottish hierarchy were consecrated on 7th May, 1661, and invested by Act of Parliament with all the ancient dignities, privileges and jurisdictions of their office. Parliament, to which the bishops were now restored, started to back Sharp's policy - the Covenants were condemned and patronage revived. When trouble broke out in the west, Sharp was furious at the miscarriage of his plans and embarked on a policy of persecution. Jealousy between Middleton and Lauderdale led to a public "show-down". Sharp threw in his lot with Lauderdale and was rewarded with a seat on the Privy Council.

## 10. Sharp the Privy Councillor.

For the next four years Sharp was the most powerful figure in Scotland for he dominated the Privy Council which now took over Parliament's work. Afraid to risk toleration, Sharp prevailed on the King to restore the High Commission Court. (16th January, 1664) The new court disclaimed all the usual formalities and maxims of law and became so notorious that the lay judges withdrew. Sharp now held precedence over all other subjects of the King in Scotland and angled for the Chancellorship with the aid of Rothes and the Archbishop of Canterbury, but the King withheld the appointment. Sharp became Praeses of the Privy Council and pressed harshly against the Covenanters. The vicious methods of Turner led to a rising but the Covenanters were crushed at Rullion Green and treated with great severity. Although Sharp was never present at those tortures he cannot escape some share of the blame, and the excesses led to his temporary eclipse.

## 11. The Tyranny.

Proof that political power was not Sharp's main motive in accepting the Primacy is shown in 1667, when his desire to see religious uniformity forced him to continue after public humiliation. Later the religious situation forced Lauderdale to recall Sharp who was appointed head of a new committee set up to deal with conventicles. Sharp now began to interfere with church appointments and services but not with doctrine or ritual. His refusal to sanction national synods led to friction within the Episcopal ranks - Ramsay of Dunblane was translated to the Isles and the Bishop of Brechin rusticated. His severities against the Covenanters led to Mitchell's attempt on Sharp's life in 1668, and many innocents suffered before Mitchell was caught and executed. Sharp's policy of persecution was partly due



The Tyranny (continued)

to the attitude of the Presbyterians, partly to expediency; and though he never interfered against the severities, he privately helped Presbyterians who had suffered. The possibility of a rising of Covenanters in the west led to the quartering of the Highland Host upon the western counties with disastrous results for which the Primate was blamed.

12. Sharp's Murder.

The murder of the Archbishop was not unpremeditated. Some ten assassins planned to deal with Carmichael and Sharp but the former escaped. The murder was committed with great cruelty and in the presence of the Primate's daughter, Isabel Sharp, on Magus Moor, near St. Andrews, on 3rd May, 1679. All save two of the assassins escaped justice. The murder caused great consternation but little real regret throughout the country. Sharp was buried with great pomp in the High Church of St. Andrews.

The Thesis is preceded by a "Foreword" and followed by an extensive Bibliography.

May, 1946.

Foreword.

The Aim and Scope of the Thesis.

Over a century has elapsed since Dr. Thomas Stephen first published his work entitled, "The Life and Times of James Sharp", and although numerous articles dealing with different aspects of Sharp's career have subsequently appeared, no fully documented biographical study has been produced since 1839; and that, despite the discovery of many relevant letters and papers which have cast new light on this very complex period of Scottish ecclesiastical history.

The present study aims not only at meeting this serious omission, but also at presenting a picture of Sharp free from all the accumulated calumny of the past two and a half centuries.

While not even his staunchest supporters claimed that James Sharp was without his faults, he hardly deserved such bitter censure from subsequent generations or such a cruel death at the hands of his contemporaries. Chief credit for building up his sinister and blameworthy reputation must be given to that group



group/ of his contemporaries whose reforming zeal and party prejudice far outweighed their sober judgment. Burnet was only seventeen when the Restoration occurred and his information, like that of Wodrow, who was born the very year in which Sharp was so foully murdered, was collected at a time when Sharp was in public odium. Subsequent chroniclers of ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland during this troubled period, deceived by the wealth of apparently incontrovertible evidence put forward by Wodrow and his fellows, gave little consideration to the motives which prompted such writings and less to those which led Sharp to act as he did.

Belonging to an age which had little use for toleration either in matters of state or of religion, Sharp, though reared in the Episcopalian atmosphere of the north, served faithfully and well the Presbyterian church in which he had been ordained until convinced, as a result of his sojourns in the south, of the utter hopelessness of trying to establish the supremacy of the Covenant. That he elected at this particular point to abandon

abandon/

what he felt to be a lost cause in favour of a moderate Episcopacy not unacceptable to the main body of the Resolutioners or to the Scottish people, is no proof that he was "a knave 'pur sang'" - rather is it proof of his astuteness which, if it had been accompanied by methods at once more conciliatory and less severe, might have spared Scotland the religious wars and schisms that followed. Sharp has been made the scapegoat by the extreme section of the Presbyterians, but it would have taken more than treachery on Sharp's part to have betrayed the Presbyterian cause successfully, had the Scottish Church not been divided against itself and weakened by the heady policy of those extremists who had forced Puritanical pietism and coercion to excess.

Nor in view of Sharp's upbringing and background can his return to the Episcopalian fold after the Restoration be regarded as altogether surprising or inconsistent; for, at a time when in order to be regarded as a good Christian in Scotland it was necessary, not merely to be a Presbyterian, but also to be a Covenanter, Sharp made no pretence of being an ardent Covenanter. Had there

there/  
been in Scotland at that time an Episcopalian Church, it is safe to say that Sharp would have been a member: as it was, he associated himself with the Resolutioners and frequently chided even those right-wing Presbyterians for their lack of toleration. After 1660, his own sympathies, being right-wing, led Sharp naturally to espouse the Episcopalian cause - a step which angered extremists of both parties in the Scottish Church.

Although he could not have remained ignorant of the many harsh criticisms levelled against him because of his change of heart, Sharp unfortunately never attempted to provide any formal justification for his actions. The part which he played in the controversy of his time and the vast collection of his correspondence provide, however, ample evidence that, if he sacrificed his loyalty to the Covenant, it was on grounds not merely of self aggrandisement, but of what he considered best for Church and State.

The method followed in compiling this "Life of James Sharp" was to collect and work through all available contemporary



contemporary/  
documents for evidence and illustrations. For this part of the work, which was necessarily protracted, the Lauderdale Papers, the Clarendon State Papers, the Records of the Privy Council and the Acts of Parliament, along with the Minutes of the Church Presbyteries and Assemblies, were the most important sources; though such miscellaneous documents - the diaries, letters and pamphlets of the times - as are contained in the various libraries were also consulted. Any conclusions which may have been reached below are based on the scrutiny of such primary sources. The chief secondary authorities were also consulted but their reading of the facts was checked against the evidence of the primary sources. Finally, though no claim is advanced to anything like infallibility of judgment, it may be stated that the following pages represent an honest and conscientious attempt to shed some light upon a page of Scottish ecclesiastical history very much obscured by partisanship of the very narrowest type. It is hoped that what is written may not be without value to the students of the period.

The Life of James Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews.

Birth, education and early life.

Although Banff Castle, James Sharp's birthplace, was pulled down about 1816 and only one wall now remains standing, several lettered stones from the old castle were built into the church-yard wall at the burial place of the Sharp family;<sup>(1)</sup> and there, scarcely a stone's throw from Sharp's place of birth, the family tombstone still bears witness that -

"Near this spot are interred the remains of  
WILLIAM SHARP of BANFF CASTLE  
and of his wife, ISOBEL LESLIE, daughter of  
JOHN LESLIE, 4th Laird of Kininvie, parents of  
ROBERT SHARP, Sheriff Clerk of Banffshire,  
who died 20th June, 1675, and of  
JAMES SHARP, ARCHBISHOP OF ST. ANDREWS,  
Primate of all Scotland, born at Banff Castle,  
4th May, 1618, and murdered near St. Andrews,  
3rd May, 1679." <sup>(2)</sup>

William Sharp, the future archbishop's father, was the son of a respectable and highly successful merchant in Aberdeen. He acquitted himself well at the university and, after his marriage

(1) New Statistical Account of Scotland. vol.11, p.30.

(2) Inscription renewed in 1908 by Col. A.C.Leslie of Kininvie.

marriage/ to the Laird of Kininvie's daughter, Isobel Leslie, who was related to the Rothes family, he secured through the patronage of Lord Findlater, appointment as Sheriff Clerk of Banffshire<sup>(1)</sup> and took up residence at Banff Castle. There two of his sons were born: Robert, the elder, followed in his father's footsteps and in time succeeded him as Sheriff Clerk of Banff: James, the younger, showed early promise of scholastic ability and graduated at an early age from the local school, where his success and pride combined to make him the envy and the butt of his fellows,<sup>(2)</sup> to the University of Aberdeen, where in 1633 he was admitted as an undergraduate student to the lectures of Mr. Robt. Ogilvie.<sup>(3)</sup> At that time the University was under the guiding hand of Patrick Forbes of Corse, who, in the very year of Sharp's birth had been appointed Episcopal Bishop of Aberdeen.<sup>(4)</sup> As young Sharp - he was only fifteen when he was first enrolled as

(1) True and Impartial Account. p.26.

(2) Misc. Scotica. vol.2. p.11. (Article on Life & Death of J.S.)

(3) MSS Records of Matriculations, Aberdeen University. 1619-92.

(4) Rait. The University of Aberdeen. p.122.



as/  
 a student at King's College, was bent on entering the ministry, he now came into personal contact with that famous group of great theologians, the "Aberdeen Doctors", men whose inspired teaching and devotion to the Episcopal Church must have made a marked impression on the young student. Although Sharp acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his teachers and graduated Master of Arts in 1637,<sup>(1)</sup> he continued to study theology under the guidance of Dr. John Forbes and Dr. Robert Baron until the troubled days of the Covenant.

Nowhere in Scotland was such strenuous resistance offered to the imposition of the 1638 Covenant on all ranks of the Church, as in Aberdeen where Sharp's tutors played a prominent part in drafting a statement of reservations.<sup>(2)</sup> Such was the spirit of the times that "not only these reverend persons, but also their friends and familiars, and those suspected to be of their principles, were preached down, whispered of, pointed at, and mobbed

(1) MSS Records of Graduations, Aberdeen University. 1619-92.

(2) Peterkin. Records of the Kirk of Scotland. vol.1. p.92.

mobbed/

against all laws, out of the protection of law, their  
 interests and the natural privileges of subjects".<sup>(1)</sup> As his  
 close contact with the Doctors exposed him to attack, Sharp,  
 unwilling then to be involved in a controversy which was as much  
 political as religious, decided to quit the northern university  
 and to continue his studies south of the border.

In England, and at Oxford in particular, he became so  
 friendly with Dr. Saunderson, the chosen Episcopal opponent of  
 the Covenant, with that famous divine, Dr. Jeremy Taylor, the  
 author of "Holy Living and Holy Dying", and with their supporters  
 that he probably would have secured some not inconsiderable bene-  
 fice in the Church of England, had not that Church, no less than  
 the Scottish Kirk, suffered violent persecution at that time. To  
 add to his worries, Sharp was seized with a violent fever which  
 threatened to prove fatal, and on the advice of his doctors he  
 decided to return to Scotland.

On his homeward journey, which was of necessity protracted,

(1) True and Impartial Account. p.28.

protracted/

James Sharp made the acquaintance of his fellow-travellers among whom was Sir James McGill of Cranston, afterward Viscount of Oxenford. This public spirited nobleman, much impressed by the young student's conversation, generously invited the invalid to spend some time convalescing at the McGill house in the country. This invitation Sharp gladly accepted and at Cranston amid pleasant surroundings, he quickly recovered his health and, at the same time, made many contacts with people of quality, which stood him in good stead later on. With Sir James McGill himself, Sharp formed a lifelong friendship, and through Sir James, he became acquainted with the Earl of Rothes,<sup>(1)</sup> a distant relative on his mother's side, who secured for Sharp an appointment as Professor of Philosophy in St. Leonard's College at St. Andrews. An anonymous writer, believed to have been Alexander Hamilton, the Laird of Kincaird, declared in 1678 that Sharp owed his appointment to that great Mr. Henderson who was the Commissioner for the Church of Scotland in England. Sharp, he wrote, "having declared

(1) True and Impartial Account. p. 30.



declared/  
to him (Henderson) his judgment against Prelacy, and  
professing himself to be a Presbyterian, he easily obtained a  
recommendation from Mr. Henderson for a regent's place in the  
University of St. Andrews".<sup>(1)</sup>

College life at St. Andrews must have proved very congenial  
to the new professor, for once his lectures and tutorials were  
over, and he seems to have been exemplary in the performance of  
his ordinary duties, he had ample time to devote himself to study  
in preparation for his avowed vocation of helping the church to  
regain her rightful place and power in the country. Not that he  
adopted the pose of a scholar recluse, for Sharp enjoyed the  
tussle of wits with his fellow professors across the dining table  
or in the common room and took an active part in the social life  
of St. Andrews. It was this delight in mental sparring that led  
Sharp into temporary disgrace at the university, for one day in  
the dining hall, after the students had withdrawn, he fell into  
violent argument with a fellow regent called John Sinclair over

(1) Misc. Scotica. vol. 2. p.13.

over/ the question of church government. (1) When to Sharp's  
 reasoned statement, based on the teachings of Hooker and Hammond,  
 Sinclair gave the lie direct, Sharp impulsively boxed his oppon-  
 ent's ear. Yet such was the quality of Sharp's work, that soon  
 the affair blew over and Sharp's "estimation grew not only in  
 the University, but with our best ministers". (2) Certainly the  
 fracas does not seem to have impaired Sharp's popularity with  
 the local gentry in whose company the professor found more and  
 more satisfaction.

(1) True and Impartial Account. p. 31.

(2) Misc. Scotica. vol. 2. p. 17.

Sharp's Ministry at Crail.

In his official capacity as Professor of Philosophy at St. Andrews, Sharp came into contact with many of the landed proprietors and gentry of the district and after the affair with Sinclair he used his influence with the Earl of Crawford to secure his own appointment as parish minister at Crail, a little fishing village a few miles along the Fife coast from St. Andrews. On 3rd November, 1647, the Presbytery of St. Andrews and Cupar "received a presentation from the Earl of Crawford, patron of the parish of Crail, nominating and presenting Mr. James Sharp, Regent to be minister of the said kirk and requiring the Presbytery to enter him to his trials".<sup>(1)</sup> Arrangements were speedily made - Sharp was required to present a thesis "De Judice controversiarum" and to preach a popular sermon on the text, Ephesians, 111, 15-17.<sup>(2)</sup> Burnet declared that Sharp "had a very small proportion of learning and was but an indifferent preacher",<sup>(3)</sup> but on this occasion he acquitted himself well, passing all his tests with the full

(1) Eccles. Records of St. Andrews & Cupar. 1641-98. p.37.

(2) *ibid.* p. 38.

(3) Burnet. History. vol.1. p.114.



full/

approval of the Presbytery and was admitted to Crail on

27th January, 1648. <sup>(1)</sup> Sharp's new appointment, humble though it

was, gave him entry to the various councils of the Church where

he speedily won for himself the respect and goodwill of his

brethren by his apparent earnestness, his assiduity and powers of

disputation. He was appointed with Robert Blair to represent the

presbytery of St. Andrews when a dispute arose in the spring of

1648 regarding the filling of the regent's place in St. Leonard's

College, <sup>(2)</sup> and later was appointed by the same body as one of

their representatives to the General Assembly. Sharp's growing

reputation both as a minister and as a committeeman led to his

being called to Edinburgh in November, 1649 but the commission of

the General Assembly refused his transportation. <sup>(3)</sup> Undaunted by

this decision, the presbytery of Edinburgh continued their attem-

pts to woo Sharp to the capital, sending ambassadors to Sharp

himself at Crail, and on 13th March, 1650, to the "Provincial"

(1) Records of Pres. of St. Andrews & Cupar. 1641-98. p.38. <sup>Ⓢ</sup>

(2) Lamont. Diary. p.4.

(3) Peterkin. Records. vol.1. p.589.

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Ⓢ "The Presbytery met for hearing Mr. James Sharp on the  
tongues, catechism, questions and chronology; in all which he  
was approved". (extract dated, 13 Jan. 1648)

"Provincial/

Assembly of Fife to assist in their calling of Mr.

(1)  
James Sharp". This assembly, unwilling to lose the minister  
(2)  
of Crail, referred the matter to the following General Assembly  
and in June that body sitting at Edinburgh "transported Mr. James  
(3) ~~Ø~~  
Sharp from Crail to Edinburgh". Cromwell's invasion, however,  
prevented the decision of the General Assembly from being carried  
out and until his elevation to the archiepiscopal throne after  
the restoration Sharp remained the parish minister of Crail.

By the summer of 1650 the religious situation had begun to  
deteriorate in Scotland. From the time of the Reformation, the  
General Assembly, mainly because it was more representative and  
democratic in composition, and freer from royal control than the  
Scottish parliament, had gradually extended its influence from  
purely ecclesiastical affairs to matters politic. The brief  
episcopal interlude under James 1 and Charles 1 fanned rather  
than curbed the presbyterian zeal and after 1638 acceptance of

(1) Records of Presbytery of Edinburgh, p.234.

(2) Lamont. Diary. p.14.

(3) Peterkin. Records. vol.1. p.618.

~~Ø~~ In the collection of papers relating to Sharp's translation to  
Edinburgh (Wodrow MSS, N.L.S.) there is no mention of any  
specific church.

of/

the Covenant was a condition rigidly demanded of all office-bearers both in Church and state. Thus when Charles II crossed to Scotland in 1650 he was refused all help and his coronation was delayed until "he took oath to observe both Covenants and to establish Presbyterianism throughout his dominions."<sup>(1)</sup> Even then, in the face of national danger, many of the extreme Covenanters opposed the recognition of a "penitent malignant" as King and the admission of many penitent Engagers to the army: and when on 20th March, 1651, the Commissioners of the Kirk issued a short exhortation and warning "calling on all patriotic Scotsmen to rise in defence of their country and forbidding ministers to utter anything in their sermons prejudicial to the national cause"<sup>(2)</sup> the result was schism in the Church of Scotland. The hothead extremists led by Guthrie of Stirling, who in his fanatical sermons attacked all penitent malignants who were allowed to fight for their lives, religion, king and country, came to be known as "Protestors" or "Remonstrants", while the more moderate party,

(1) Thurloe. State Papers. vol.1. p.148.

(2) Mathieson. Religion and Politics in Scotland. vol.2. p.134.



party/ because they supported the public resolutions in favour of proscribed royalists and engagers, were dubbed "Resolutioners".

It was to this latter party, led by Douglas, the then Moderator of the General Assembly, Dickson and Wood, that James Sharp with his episcopal upbringing and background, attached himself: and when in August, 1651, the greater part of the Committee of Estates was captured by the Cromwellian forces at Eliot in Angus, he was one of the half-dozen ministers in attendance who were seized<sup>(1)</sup> and shipped from Broughty Ferry for incarceration in the Tower. There he remained despite the efforts of his friends among the Resolutioners to secure his early release - the Presbytery of St. Andrews "did cause a letter to be written to Lieut. General Monck for the release of the clergy taken prisoner at Eliot"<sup>(2)</sup> - until the following April when, thanks to the influence of Wariston, the Council of State decided that "Mr. Sharp, a Scot-

(1) Lamont. Diary. p.34.

(2) Minutes of Pres. of St. Andrews and Cupar. p.63.

Scotch/  
 minister, prisoner in the Tower, be bailed, on security  
 not to go out of the city, and beyond the late lines of communi-  
 cation, and to be of good behaviour<sup>(1)</sup>. Apparently Sharp  
 complied with the Council's terms for two months later, his bond  
 was returned and he was "permitted to return to Scotland,  
 rendering himself to Major-General Deane on his coming thither."<sup>(2)</sup>  
 Sharp used those two months of enforced waiting to make friends  
 with Monck and other influential persons who were in later years  
 to be of service to him.

Once back in Scotland Sharp quickly gathered up the threads  
 of his domestic and ecclesiastical affairs. Thanks to the good  
 offices of James Moncrieff, one of his parishioners, he made good  
 contact with the prosperous laird of Randerston, whose daughter,  
 Helen Moncrieff, he married on 6th April, 1653.<sup>(3)</sup> After a great  
 marriage feast at Randerston, Sharp carried his bride home to the  
 Manse of Crail where in due time her three children were born.

(1) Cal. of State Papers. (Domestic) 1651-2. p.213.  
 (2) *ibid.* pp. 296 and 312.  
 (3) Lamont. Diary. p.54.

James Sharp seems to have been an affectionate husband and father, and there is no documentary evidence to substantiate the charges of carnal frailty and immorality with his sister-in-law and other women, levelled at him by the anonymous author whose writings have been preserved in the *Miscellania Scotica*.<sup>(1)</sup>

Meanwhile the government had fallen into the hands of Oliver Cromwell who sent north eight commissioners to inaugurate the new government in Scotland. In spite of their promises of justice, protection and religious toleration, the commissioners met with great opposition from both clergy and laymen. The Protestors, in particular, were loud-spoken in their opposition to Cromwell's proposals of union and toleration, but Broghill, Cromwell's chief commissioner, managed to persuade the Resolutioners to accept the 1654 Ordinances and to keep the peace.<sup>(2)</sup> Writing to Cromwell on 26th February, 1655, Broghill reported that he found the Protestor party difficult but that Douglas, Dickson, Wood and Mr. Sharp of Fife were more reasonable and well-disposed. Of Sharp, who because

(1) *Miscel. Scotica*. vol.11. pps. 19, 22, 94, 97.

(2) *Firth. Scotland and the Commonwealth*. vol.11. p.163.



because/  
of his energetic activities in the Provincial Assembly  
of Fife had been elected Moderator when the Assembly sat at  
Kirkcaldy in September, 1654,<sup>(1)</sup> Broghill wrote, "Mr. Sharp is a  
man I have made good use of in all this business, and one who', I  
think, is devoted to your service".<sup>(2)</sup> Sharp's willingness to be  
of service to those in authority was proved in July of the same  
year when by his intervention he prevented open hostilities  
between a body of Cromwell's troops under Major Davidson and the  
members of the Provincial Assembly of Fife. Davidson tried to  
disband the assembly when it met at Cupar and it was Sharp, the  
Moderator of the preceding Assembly who conferred with him and  
secured the peaceful dissolution of the meeting.<sup>(3)</sup> Sharp's growing  
prominence in the deliberations and disputes of the Kirk now  
brought him new honour, for in 1656 when the war of pamphlets  
between the Resolutioners and the Protestors was at its height,  
both parties decided to lay their case before Cromwell and Sharp  
was chosen because "he had been long in England.. and seemed more

(1) Lamont. Diary. p.79.

(2) Acts of Parliament, Scotland. Ser.Vl. vol.11. p.900.

(3) Lamont. Diary. p.86.

more/  
 than ordinary zealous for Presbytery"<sup>(1)</sup> to represent his  
 party. His nomination was put forward by his friend Wood, the  
 new Principal of St. Andrews and seconded by Carmichael of Mark-  
 inch, and in spite of Blair's opposition,<sup>(2)</sup> Sharp accompanied  
 Broghill south to London in August, 1656, carrying with him  
 detailed instructions from Douglas, Dickson and Wood as to what  
 he should represent to Cromwell regarding the National Church.<sup>(3)</sup>  
 Broghill also gave his companion a letter of recommendation to  
 Cromwell.<sup>(4)</sup> The Protestors sent up first James Simpson of Airth,  
 and later Guthrie and Gillespie to represent them.

Writing to Sharp in London early in the new year (Jan.18,  
 1657) Baillie drew his colleague's attention to a new possibility  
 - "I hope you shall, by God's help, easily get the desires of  
 those heady men (the Protestors) crushed; but all my fear is, that  
 the end of your strife will be the Protector's determination to

(1) Burnet. History. p.42.

(2) Row. Blair. p.303.

(3) Register of Consultations of Ministers of Edinburgh. vol.1. p.204

(4) Thurloe. State Papers. vol.44. fol.341. @

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@ "The bearer is the minister employed out of Scotland from the  
 General Assembly. He is a sober, good man and a friend to  
 his Highness". 9:11:56.

to/  
 subject our poor Church to some new Erastian model, which shall be very grievous, albeit far more tolerable than the tyrannic turkish yoke of the Protestors".<sup>(1)</sup> Cromwell, however, was more anxious to see peace within the Scottish Church than to impose a new ecclesiastical regimen and listened with considerable patience to the Protestors' case as expounded at great length by Guthrie. Indeed, Guthrie so monopolised the Protector's time that Broghill had to intervene to secure a hearing for Sharp whose adroitness and manner so impressed Cromwell that he is reported to have said, "That gentleman after the Scotch way ought to be called Sharp of that ilk".<sup>(2)</sup> Unwilling to make a hasty decision, the Protector now referred the dispute to a special committee which listened to both parties. Sharp had many opportunities of giving the Protestors the lie direct and felt quite confident as to the outcome of the controversy. "Were you here at the source of affairs you would see", he wrote to Baillie on 28th July, "that the Protestors and their abettors have not such cause to boast and

(1) Baillie. Letters. vol.3. p.335.

(2) True and impartial Account. p.34.



and/

brag as they do... Do not think that the late transactions

here will be the measure and rule of future actings in reference

to us - do not think that our necks will be put under the yoke of

(1) these men". After six months, Sharp, with the support of the

English Presbyterians, persuaded Cromwell to turn down a proposal

for a joint commission to purge each synod, and although the Act

of Classes was renewed, Baillie declares that Sharp was given an

(2) assurance that the Act "should do no harm". On his return to

Scotland Sharp received a tremendous ovation from his fellow

Resolutioners who hailed him as "the great instrument of God"

(3) sent to cross the designs of the Protestors. Baillie, who went

(4) to Edinburgh specially to hear Sharp's report, was wildly

enthusiastic and related in his letters how, "He gave us a very

notable relation of every passage, how, by the good hand of God,

he had gotten all the designs of the exceeding busy and bold

(1) Baillie. Letters. vol. 3. p.342.

(2) ibid. vol.3. p.352.

(3) Register of Consult. of Edinburgh Ministers, vol.2. p.91. @

(4) Register of Consult. Edinburgh. vol.1. pps 348 - 369.

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@ "I have spoken my heart to honoured and worthy Mr. Sharp, whose demeanour has been heer for everie way good, that if your cause could receive accession by the carriage of an individual person, it has received it by his". Broghill to Douglas. 3:8:57.

bold/  
 Remonstrants' defeat; that the Protector had dismissed him  
 with very good words, assuring he should be loath to grant any-  
 thing to our prejudice. Whereupon," said Baillie, "we blessed  
 God, that by Mr. Sharp's labours, was kept off us for a time,  
 a much feared storm".<sup>(1)</sup>

The Protestors in spite of their London failures continued  
 the struggle in Scotland. The war of pamphlets was renewed and  
 Sharp was ever in the forefront. After his return to Crail he  
 bemoaned to his friend Drummond (28th August, 1658) that "No  
 peace can be had with these men (the Protestors) but upon their  
 own terms, how destructive soever to truth and order".<sup>(2)</sup> They  
 had recently produced a most bitter invective, "Address to the  
 Christian Leader" in which they tried "ad ultimum conatum" to  
 render the Resolutioners odious. So serious did the situation  
 become that on 5th February, 1659, the leading Resolutioners,  
 Douglas, Dickson and Wood wrote to Thurloe, the Principal Secret-

(1) Baillie. Letters. vol.3. p.362.

(2) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.3.

Secretary/  
 of State at Whitehall, thanking him for his past help  
 and notifying him that they "judged it convenient to send up our  
 brother again for a short while, that he may be ready, by the  
 assistance of your Lordship and others whom the Lord hath inclined  
 to tender our condition, to prevent any prejudice they may  
 intend against the government of this Church. Our brother will  
 fully acquaint your Lordship with our condition and our deport-  
 ment".<sup>(1)</sup> And so, on 7th February, two days later, "Mr. James

Sharp, minister of Craill, took journey from Edinburgh to London,  
 sent by the ministry for the public resolutions to withstand the  
 actings of the Protestors".<sup>(2)</sup> On this occasion, however, Sharp

did not repeat his earlier triumph, for his officiousness proved  
 obnoxious to an already harassed government. On 29th June, by  
 an Order of Council, Sharp was ordered to cease meddling in  
 public affairs, to return to Scotland, and to "keep within the  
 compass of his own calling".<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Thurloe. State Papers. vol.63. No. 131.

(2) Lamont. Diary. p.113.

(3) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.5.



By the close of the Commonwealth period then, James Sharp, in spite of his unsuccessful embassy of 1659, stood high in the estimation of the Resolutioners. His success in debate and in committee had singled him out as a leader, and the experience he had gained, both in Scotland and in the south, in handling men and affairs, not only fitted him for the intrigues of the new reign but also whetted his ambition and his desire for power. His personal success with Cromwell, to whom he repeatedly acknowledged his obligation, <sup>(1)</sup> with Broghill and with Monck, convinced him that, given opportunity, he could make himself a power in the land. The death of Oliver Cromwell plunged the country into a welter of intrigue which provided ample opportunity for the high-flying ambitions of the minister of Craill.

(1) True and Impartial Account. p.35.

Sharp's Third Mission to London.

In May, 1659, Richard Cromwell, rather than remain a puppet in the hands of ambitious soldiers, resigned the Protectorate and retired into private life; whereupon Monck, who had resisted the exiled king's advances as long as the Cromwells held office, now felt himself constrained to take action in favour of the king and prevent the country from falling into anarchy.<sup>(1)</sup> Accordingly he assembled his officers in the historic Church of Greyfriars in Edinburgh and invited them to help him "make the military power subservient to the civil".<sup>(2)</sup> Without exception they accepted his lead and on the 18th November Monck began his southward march to London. En route, faced with opposition from Lambert's forces, Monck halted at Coldstream and dispatched a messenger to Craill asking Sharp to come with all possible expedition for consultation. Sharp's earlier missions to the south had given him contact with several of the leading figures, political as well as ecclesiastical of the day and had stirred in him that sense of importance and

(1) Baker: Chronicle, pages 651, 663.

(2) Row: Blair - p. 339.

and/  
that desire for power which must be regarded as the basic cause of those actions which later brought on his head the curses and maledictions of many of his one-time colleagues. Monck's request must have seemed to the minister of Craill a promise of preferment to come and he let no grass grow under his feet. Without even waiting to secure the approval of those leaders among the Resolutioners who had previously briefed him, he hurried south to Coldstream. There, after but two hours' rest, Sharp drafted a declaration which not only won over the dissentients in Monck's own army but also brought over to his side over half of Lambert's men. Monck continued his march and Sharp returned to his parish. Thus, before ever he had been chosen by the Resolutioners to uphold their cause, James Sharp had become "persona grata" with the general who "afterwards repeatedly acknowledged to the King, Mr. Sharp's important services at this juncture". (1)

(1) Stephen: Life of Sharp - p.21.



Monck crossed the Border on New Year's Day, 1660, and early in January some of the leading Resolutioners in Edinburgh, anxious to keep their concerns prominently before the general and, at the same time, to show their confidence in his handling of Scottish affairs, decided to appoint an agent to attend him. <sup>(1)</sup> The success which had accompanied Sharp's earlier missions as advocate and champion of the Resolutioners' cause made him their obvious choice; and on January 10th, Mr. David Dickson and Mr. Robert Douglas wrote asking Monck to provide a pass for Sharp so that he "might at your Lordship's direction give information to others of the state of this Church". <sup>(2)</sup> To this request Monck willingly agreed, and within five days Sharp received from Thomson, the general's auditor, instructions "to undertake a winter journey and to come to him to London with as much convenient speed as your occasions can possibly permit". <sup>(3)</sup> No reasons for the journey were given and Sharp was enjoined to confide only in Mr.

(1) Register of Consultations of Ministers of Edinburgh. Vol. 2. 1657 - 1660. p. 192.

(2) MSS. Register. vol. 15. p.55.

(3) Wodrow: Church History. vol.1. p.5.

Mr./

Douglas as "the general does not desire this to be made too public."<sup>(1)</sup> On the following day, 16th January, 1660, Monck wrote to Dickson and Douglas from Ferrybarns assuring them of his concern for the welfare of their church and enclosing a pass for James Sharp "who, the sooner he comes to me, the more welcome he shall be, because he will give me an opportunity to show how much I am a wellwisher to your Church and to yourselves."<sup>(2)</sup>

Thus assured, several of the leading Resolutioner divines, David Dickson, Robert Douglas, James Wood, John Smith, George Hutchison and Andrew Ker, met in Edinburgh in an "extrajudicial" way on 6th February when they drafted instructions for their representative in London. Sharp was urged to use his "utmost endeavours that the Kirk of Scotland might, without interruption or encroachment, enjoy the freedom and privileges of her established judicatures ratified by the laws of the land",<sup>(3)</sup> and to use all

(1) Glasgow Univ. MS. Correspondence of James Sharp with Robert Douglas - BE8, d 18.

(2) Wodrow: vol.1. p.5.

(3) Miscel. Scotica - p.54. General Assembly Records: vol. p.

all/  
 lawful and prudent means for remedying lax toleration  
 which encouraged gross errors and loose practices in the Church.  
 He was further instructed to secure the restoration of "vaking  
 stipends" then frequently diverted from the pious uses to which  
 they had originally been assigned, and the resumption of payment  
 of stipends to ministers lawfully called and admitted by

(1)  
 presbyteries. To Monck, this self-appointed cabal addressed  
 a letter commending Sharp's mission and professing that they  
 aimed at nothing but the continuance of "these Gospell ordinances  
 and privileges which are established among us". (2) Other letters  
 were written in a similar strain recommending Sharp to the  
 leading Presbyterians in London, to Colonel Wetham, Edward Calamy  
 and Simeon Ash, inviting their good offices in assisting their  
 agent in the carrying out of his trust.

Sharp, who arrived in London on 13th February, seems to have  
 lost no time in presenting his credentials to General Monck and

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.5.

(2) MSS. Register of Consultations. vol.15. p.57.



and/ in contacting influential London Presbyterians. One of these, Mr. Manton, Sharp mentioned in his first letter to Douglas on the day following his arrival in the capital, told him of the high regard in which Monck held the ministers in Scotland. Monck's own letter to Douglas dispatched on the 16th February, was couched in the most friendly terms, <sup>(1)</sup> promising that it would be his care "that the Gospel ordinances and privileges of God's people may be established both here and there" and that he would "improve his interest to the utmost for the preservation of the rights of the Church of Scotland". <sup>(2)</sup> That the Resolutioners, even Douglas himself, failed to appreciate the equivocal language of Monck's letter is revealed by the note sent by Douglas to Sharp on 23rd February urging the latter to "encourage the general in his great work for the good of religion and the peace of the three nations, through all the difficulties he may meet with". This enthusiasm of Douglas for the establishment of Presbyterianism throughout the

(1) Baillie: Letters, vol. 3, p. 585; also MSS. Register of Consult. vol. 15. p. 61.

(2) Wodrow vol. 1. p. 6.

the/  
 three countries reveals the basic cause of the strife  
 that followed. It was the complete absence of toleration among  
 the Presbyterians, their willing acceptance of the tyranny of the  
 Covenant with its harsh, ignorant and unflinching censorship and  
 bold seizure of practically every department of domestic and  
 political life, that prevented anything savouring of compromise,  
 and led politicians, and soldiers like Monck to shelter behind a  
 facade of ambiguity whenever it proved expedient. Thus, Douglas  
 and his followers were shocked when Monck whom they regarded as  
 "one called of God in a strait"<sup>(1)</sup> was reported by Sharp (Feb. 21)  
 as having declared in a speech, at the reinstatement of the members  
 of Parliament secluded by the Rump, that he was in favour of  
 "presbyterian government not rigid"<sup>(2)</sup>. Sharp himself seems at  
 this stage to be questioning the uncompromising attitude of his  
 party for he suggested in the same letter that he should be recalled.  
 At the same time it would seem that his lust for power and his

(1) MSS. Register - vol. 15. p. 54.

(2) Wodrow. vol. 1. p. 6.

his/ willingness to be of service to men of importance like Monck and Lauderdale, made him unwilling to give up his position in London even after Douglas had written (28th Feb.) giving him the option of returning to Craill. That men should regard rigid Presbyterianism as undesirable, was beyond the comprehension of Douglas who wrote both Sharp and Monck to that effect, although he was forced to admit within two months that in Scotland "the generality of this new upstart generation have no love to presbyterial government; but are wearied of that yoke, feeding themselves with the fancy of episcopacy, or moderate episcopacy."<sup>(1)</sup>

The favour in which Sharp stood with Monck must have strengthened the envoy's sense of power. Every day, he complained to Douglas, his chambers were besieged by petitioners who sought his good offices in gaining access to the general; and his time was much occupied in interceding for the Windsor prisoners, particularly Lauderdale, between whom and Monck, Sharp was the regular messenger.

(1) Wodrow. vol. 1. p. 21.



messenger./

Though Douglas had urged Sharp to work for Lauderdale's  
 release<sup>(1)</sup> and although Sharp frequently reported his own personal  
 contacts with the captives to Douglas, the latter can hardly have  
 been aware of Lauderdale's secret negotiations with the exiled  
 king. That Sharp, on the other hand, must have been well aware  
 of the royalist's plans is evident from Lauderdale's draft letter  
 to Charles at Breda on 2nd May. "The honest bearer's activeness  
 and usefulness in your service sets him far above my  
 recommendation; yet I cannot but bear witness what I have seen  
 and known for many years, even that God hath made him as happy ane  
 instrument in your service as any I know of in his country".  
 Sharp, Lauderdale went on to say, "will give you so full and clear  
 an account of persons and things here and elsewhere that I need  
 say nothing, for he knows and will inform your Majesty all that I  
 know - - his affections are wholly yours".<sup>(2)</sup>

During the whole month of March plans began to take shape  
 for the restoration of the King and although there is no written

(1) Wodrow vol. 1. p. 7.

(2) Lauderdale Papers vol. 1. p. 23.

written/

evidence to show that Sharp did anything to prejudice the Presbyterian cause at this stage, there is ample proof that he dabbled in politics and used his not inconsiderable influence in favour of the royal return. On the 13th February Monck wrote to Haselrige indicating his apparent desire for the continuation of the Commonwealth which he described as "the desire of my soul"<sup>(1)</sup> yet within a month Sharp and his English cronies, Edmund Calamy and Simeon Ash had a long conversation with Monck in private and "convinced him that the setting up a Commonwealth or Free State in these nations is altogether unfeasible and un-practicable, and did to our sense beat him off that sconce which he hath maintained hitherto".<sup>(2)</sup> Douglas and his party while supporting a restoration were determined that Charles Stuart should return only on Covenant terms: Sharp, better acquainted with the swing of public opinion in the south, warned them frequently that overemphasis on such a narrow sectarian basis as the Covenant might lay the Resolutioners

(1) Clarendon State Papers. iii. 670.

(2) MSS. Register of Consult. vol. 15 p. 100.

Resolutioners/

open to a charge of being inimicable to the King's return and do damage to the Presbyterian cause. Sharp related, probably to quieten his own secret misgivings, how he himself had been pointed out by the Cavaliers "as the Scottish Presbyter, who stickled to bring in the secluded members, to undo all by the Presbyterian empire".<sup>(1)</sup> Early in March (4th.) Sharp, writing to his friend, John Smith, described how in London the Presbyterians were afraid that some modified form of Episcopacy would be introduced at the restoration - "The great fear is, that the King will come in and that with him, moderate episcopacy, at the least, will take place here. The good party are doing what they can to keep the covenant interest on foot but I fear there will be much ado to have it so... for God's sake take care that our people keep themselves quiet, and wait till the Lord give a fit opportunity".<sup>(2)</sup>

Two days later he warned Douglas that "the buzz of some is loud enough, No bishop, no King", and that "the honest party are likely to be swallowed up".<sup>(3)</sup> Sharp professed to be much concerned over

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.7.

(2) ibid. p. 8-9.

(3) ibid. p.9.



over/

reports current at Westminster that the Resolutioners wished "to be settled in a commonwealth way and were against the King's coming in on any terms"<sup>(1)</sup>, and he took steps to undo the damage to their cause, flatly contradicting the gossips and declaring that nothing would satisfy Scotland but the King on Covenant terms. Douglas expressed his satisfaction with Sharp's action and the support which Monck promised to the Presbyterian cause pointing out that "It is best that presbyterian government be settled simply: for we know by experience that moderate episcopacy is the next step to episcopal tyranny"<sup>(2)</sup>. As for the rumours current in London, Douglas along with his colleagues, Dickson and Hutchison, wrote a joint letter to Sharp vindicating themselves from the charge of being solely for a Commonwealth,<sup>(3)</sup> and at the same time Douglas warmly repudiated Monck's inference that the Resolutioners were "indifferent to anie government"<sup>(4)</sup>. What they did believe was that if the King did not come in on Covenant terms, it would be disadvantageous to religion.<sup>(5)</sup>

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.10.

(2) *ibid.* p.10.

(3) *ibid.* p.11.

(4) Register of Consultations of Edinburgh Ministers. p.197.

(5) MSS. Register of Consult. vol.15. p.99.

By the middle of March public opinion was strongly in favour of government by King, Lords and Commons and Monck had finally rejected the overtures of those who still desired a Commonwealth. Sharp reported to his Edinburgh colleagues that "ere long a treaty must be sett on foot with the King: also the people will bring him in very shortly: for all the country over they call for him, and will have none for a Parliament but those of his party: and the whole militia of city and nation is putt into the hands of persons disaffected to commonwealth".<sup>(1)</sup> On 16th March, the Long Parliament, which had helped the Presbyterian cause by declaring the Covenant to be obligatory and by releasing after frequent intervention by Sharp the Earls of Crawford and Lauderdale, was dissolved and writs issued for a new parliament to meet on 25th April. Sharp at this stage, asked to be relieved of his duties in London but continued at the earnest entreaties of Douglas who counselled him to stay as long as he could be serviceable to Monck or to the Lords recently set free.<sup>(2)</sup> Thus far Sharp had served his party well, discharging

(1) Register of Consultations of Edinburgh Ministers. p.196.  
 (2) Wodrow. vol.1. p.12.

discharging/ the various tasks assigned to him with faithfulness and ability. Baillie had good reason for describing him as "a very worthie, pious, wise and diligent young man" whom "we (the Resolutioners) trusted as our own souls"<sup>(1)</sup>. But by urging Sharp's continued stay in London, Douglas unknowingly put in his way many opportunities for personal preferment and glory which it would have required a man stronger in character and less self-seeking than James Sharp to ignore or reject.

It was in March, 1660, that Sharp became involved in a heated political controversy with General Monck regarding the appointment of a commission of English judges to deal with Scottish cases. Before he left Scotland Monck had made temporary arrangements for the direction of affairs in the North,<sup>(2)</sup> but when the Long Parliament proceeded, with his approval, to appoint a commission of ten judges to serve as civil and criminal judges in Scotland,<sup>(3)</sup> Sharp took the General to task. Writing to Douglas on 13th March, Sharp reported how he had spoken very plainly to Monck on the subject and

(1) Baillie's Letters. vol.3. p. 352 and 460.  
 (2) Cromwellian Union. (S.H.S.) p.93.  
 (3) Nicoll's Diary. p.378.



and/

warned him that "instead of releiving of it (Scotland) he did take a way to ruine it, and to increase its bondage by sending down men fitt for nothing but to pillage and prey upon it". (1)

Lauderdale supported Sharp and together they persuaded the members of the Council "to endeavour to the utmost that Scotland may be made as free a nation as themselves". (2)

Monck was evidently much impressed by Sharp's earnestness and the wisdom of his counsel for while continuing with the scheme, he admitted privately to Sharp

"that the judges were only sent down for the fashion, and in a month or two there would be a change: that it was necessity put him on it, and a little time would show, it was not for Scotland's

hurt" (3) and so it proved.

It was in March also that the Presbyterian Church of Ireland made overtures to Sharp and Douglas through Lord Broghill and others regarding joint action for the settling of religion and liberty. An invitation was extended to Sharp and his friend James Wood, who in 1657 had been appointed Provost of the Old College at

(1) Register of Consultations of Edinburgh Ministers. p.196.

(2) MSS. Register vol.15 pps.95-6.

(3) Wodrow. vol.1. p.18.

at/  
St. Andrews, to visit Ireland in order to promote friendly relations and lay plans for future cooperation. Douglas evidently favoured the proposal and sent on to Sharp for his guidance a document entitled "The judgment of some sober-minded men in Scotland concerning the settlement of the Government in the three nations"<sup>(1)</sup>. The final decision he left however to Sharp, and by the time this letter reached London, other more important business had cropped up and Sharp dropped all thought of this journey to Ireland on a religious errand in favour of a journey to the continent on a political one - the royal return.

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p. 13.

Sharp's Mission to Breda.

Even before 25th April, when the new Parliament met to draft the terms upon which Charles Stuart might be restored to the throne of his fathers, a great deal of secret negotiation and intrigue had been going on both north and south of the Tweed. In Scotland, the Resolutioners, anxious that their views might be adequately presented, pressed Monck to receive a special commission to supplement the efforts of Sharp. Monck, however, satisfied with Sharp's counsel, refused, and when Sharp assured his colleagues on April 7 that "the Lord having opened a fair door of hope, we may look for a settlement upon the grounds of the Covenant, and thereby a foundation laid for security against prelatic and fanatical assaults"<sup>(1)</sup> - the Resolutioners agreed to leave the settlement of Scotland's affairs to the King's discretion provided, as Douglas said, that "we have the liberty of a free nation to deal for keeping what we have already both in Kirk and State".<sup>(2)</sup> But even although Sharp frequently urged that Scotland should make no

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.18.

(2) MSS. Register of Consult. vol.15. pps.128-9.



no/ applications regarding religion till the King's return, and  
 quoted a letter from a Mr. Bruce at the Hague to the effect that  
 "the King is satisfied that Scotland keep quiet", <sup>(1)</sup> the Commiss-  
 ion of the Nobles, Shires and Burghs which met in Edinburgh on  
 6th April felt otherwise, <sup>(2)</sup> and dispatched Glencairn to London.  
 Middleton, too, sent a messenger, Murray, in the name of the  
 Scottish nobility direct to the King in Holland; but in the end  
 no notice was taken of Scotland in the Declaration of Breda which  
 Sir John Grenville in the name of the King presented to both  
 Houses of Parliament on the first of May, 1660. <sup>(3)</sup>

Sharp himself was not idle during April for, with Douglas's  
 concurrence, he interviewed some of the leading Episcopalsians  
 including one, Doctor Morley, who had just returned from the King  
 at Breda. He also worked unceasingly to bring together the diver-  
 gent parties so "that all who truly mind the nation's interest, may  
 not divide, but concur unanimously without byends and self respects!" <sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.18.

(Ad. MS. 23113. p.80.

(2) Minutes of Sederunts of Nobles, Shires and Burghs. (Brit.Mus.)

(3) Cal. of State Papers . (1659-60) ps. 428-30.

(4) Wodrow. vol.1. p.19.

In a letter to Douglas, Sharp expressed his fear that "if our noblemen, or others, fall upon factions ways, and grasp after places, they will cast reproach upon their country and fall short of their ends. I fear the interest of the Solemn League and Covenant shall be neglected; and for religion, I smell that moderate episcopacy is the fairest accommodation, which moderate men who wish well to religion, expect".<sup>(1)</sup> Whether or not Sharp had thus early begun to change his ecclesiastical allegiance and wished to drop a hint to Douglas of his views cannot be proved: certainly Douglas failed to reckon Sharp as one of the "moderate men who wished well to religion" and pressed him to persuade Monck to allow him to make a personal visit to Holland with the object of informing the King regarding the state of religious affairs in Scotland.<sup>(2)</sup> Within a few months Douglas was to complain that the Dutch visit was Sharp's undoing but whatever part Monck played in actually sending Sharp to Breda - and it seems clear from Sharp's

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.20.

(2) MSS. Register vol.15. p.128. Wodrow. vol.1. p.20.

Sharp's/  
own letters to his friend Wood as well as to Douglas that Sharp undertook the mission at the General's instigation - the fact remains that Douglas himself urged Sharp to make this journey before Monck gave instructions.

Regarding the actual purpose of the mission Sharp professed in a letter sent on 4th May from Gravesend to his friend Wood at St. Andrews that he carried a message from Monck to the King, a message which "doth concern the interest of religion as it is professed by honest men heer".<sup>(1)</sup> In the light of his subsequent

behaviour, this reference to "honest men heer" appears ambiguous, but in a letter written a few days before to Douglas, Sharp regretted that he could not await the approval of his Edinburgh colleagues as the General was so insistent, that his object was to persuade the King to declare his loyalty to the "godly sober party, and to stand for the true protestant religion".<sup>(2)</sup>

Sharp even urged Douglas to send on by express messenger any very special information he wished conveyed to the King, and on 8th May,

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol. 1. p. 25.

(2) Wodrow. vol. 1. p. 21.





May/ the very day Sharp arrived at Breda, this group of ministers - Douglas, Dickson, Smith and Hutchison - forwarded to their representative detailed instructions and a letter to Charles. Douglas's covering letter reminded Sharp that "your great errand will be for this Kirk", <sup>(1)</sup> and stressed the fact that the Resolutioners desired no toleration as far as the Scottish Church was concerned because "the generality of the people, and the whole ministry have embraced the established religion by law, with his majesty's consent" and "none here petition for toleration except some inconsiderable naughty men." <sup>(2)</sup> This piece of pious deceit or wishful thinking both Douglas and the King must have realised was far from the truth - Douglas had admitted less than three weeks before this, the increasing tendency of the upstart generation in Scotland to favour moderate Episcopacy and the King was far from ignorant of the schism that rent the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. In the official instructions to Sharp which accompanied the royal letter Douglas reiterated the desire of his colleagues to

(1) Wodrow. vol. 1. p. 22.

(2) *ibid.* p. 22.

to/ avoid toleration or compromise. The King had to be informed that "there is no show even of conveniency or advantage to alter anything of the settled government of the Kirk of Scotland, wherein all the people are generally principled, and do acquiesce", and that the Resolutioners doubted nothing of the King's constancy "in adhering to what he is engaged unto by covenant, as to us".<sup>(1)</sup>

That Sharp set out on a purely religious mission however, seems very improbable for he admitted to Douglas that he carried, in addition to a large letter for the king, another from Sir John Grenville for Edward Hyde, the prime minister, recommending Sharp as a worthy agent "because he (General Monck) looks on him as a very honest man, and as one that may be useful to His Majesty's several ways both here and in Scotland, especially in moderating the affairs of the Kirk and our Church, and who hath a very good reputation with the ministers of both kingdoms".<sup>(2)</sup> It was

this association with Clarendon, who was well known for his extremist Episcopalian views, that first roused the

(1) MSS. Register. vol. 15. 133. : Wodrow. vol. 1. p. 24.

(2) Clarendon State Papers. vol. 3. p. 741.

the/ suspicions of Douglas regarding Sharp's behaviour and attitude towards Presbyterianism. Sharp also admitted to Douglas that his "going carries the face of some concernment in reference to England", but declared "that for my part, I shall not be accessory to anything prejudicial to the Presbyterian government; but to appear for it in any other way than is within my sphere, is inconvenient, and may do harm and not good"<sup>(1)</sup>. What exactly Sharp meant or intended to be understood by the latter part of this statement is not clear. The probability is that he had already realised the hopelessness of the Presbyterian cause in England and, as yet in doubt as to the future of the Scottish Kirk, was determined to do nothing which might prejudice his own chances of preferment.

Burnet, who was still in his teens at the time of the royal restoration and who later had good cause to detest Sharp, maintained in his History that Sharp also carried with him when he went to Breda, a letter from Glencairn to His Majesty recommending Sharp as "a man entirely Episcopalian in principle, and the fittest person

(1) Wodrow. vol. 1. p. 22.



person/  
 whom he could trust to give him correct information  
 respecting both Church and state in Scotland", <sup>(1)</sup> but there is no  
 written evidence to substantiate this notion and, in any case,  
 Glencairn was himself in London at that time as the chosen  
 representative of the Scottish presbyterian nobles!

Crossing from Gravesend in a frigate specially commissioned  
 by Monck, Sharp reached Breda on the 8th May and was received by  
 the King with "as much kindness and respect as I could have wished"  
 that same evening. <sup>(2)</sup> On the following morning he had a private  
 audience lasting an hour and a half with the King who asked how  
 things were with the various leaders of the Resolutioners and "did  
 express a great affection to Scotland and a resolution to restore  
 us to our former liberties". <sup>(3)</sup> So much was Sharp taken up with the  
 grandeur and activity of the Court that he scarcely found time to  
 communicate with his colleagues at home. The single letter written

(1) Burnet's History. p. 60.

(2) Lauderdale Papers. vol. 1, p. 26.

(3) *ibid.* vol. 1, p. 26.

written/

from Breda to Douglas on 11th May was brief and dealt merely with the details of his reception. "The King", he wrote, "surpasseth all ever I heard or expected of him. I gave him an account of my management at London and congratulated his Majesty in your name, which he took very kindly".<sup>(1)</sup> Regarding the actual purpose of his mission he said nothing, and it was not until after his return to England with the King on 25th May that he deigned to give his colleagues a more detailed account of what transpired at Breda. His letter to Douglas of the 26th May provided indeed but a bald description of his return journey in one of the Royal frigates with some of the English clergy and of the King's reception by Monck at Dover; although he did mention with apologies that all the instructions which Douglas had sent on to him for the careful presentation of the Resolutioners' case to the King, had been held up in London. Sharp hoped however to present the letters to the King at the first opportunity for he had found his Majesty "very

(1) Wodrow. vol. 1. p. 28.

"very/ affectionate to Scotland, and resolved not to wrong the settled government of our Church"<sup>(1)</sup>. Sharp also dropped the hint that "they are mistaken who go about to settle the presbyterian government" in England.

With the royal return "un fait accompli", Sharp found time to write on 29th May a fuller account of his mission on the continent to his friend Wood at St. Andrews and to Douglas at Edinburgh. In the first of those letters he related how that "most excellent prince, admirably improven by his long afflictions"<sup>(2)</sup> had granted him half a dozen private audiences and given him the impression that "however he may be influenced as to the settling of religion in England, yet what the Lord hath wrought in Scotland will be perfected and not altered by his Majesty"<sup>(3)</sup>. He also related, with not a little pride, how he had made a brief tour of the chief Dutch towns, Amsterdam, Harlem and Leiden, and stayed a week at the Hague at Clarendon's invitation, before crossing in the King's navy. He professed to Wood that he was much exhausted by his efforts and

(1) Wodrow. vol. 1. p. 29.

(2) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.26.

(3) ibid. p.27.

and/  
 hoped for an early release from "this toylsome life".

The letter to Douglas, couched in more formal language, revealed Monck's reasons for sending Sharp over to Breda. He was dispatched, Sharp wrote, to give the King a detailed account of Monck's activities and preparations for the royal return, to urge his Majesty to adopt a policy of moderation in the settlement of his affairs and to persuade him to send a letter to the Presbyterian ministers in England intimating his resolve to bear down profanity and to countenance religion in the power of it.<sup>(1)</sup> But, Sharp went on to stress, he also seized the opportunity of giving the King a most full account of the state of the Scottish Church and presented a loyal address "in the name of the body of the ministry of the Church of Scotland, who had persevered in their integrity and loyalty in all revolutions".<sup>(2)</sup> Sharp professed himself assured that the King had been falsely represented as an enemy of Scotland and Scotland's Kirk - for Charles, both publicly and privately, testified to Scotland's fidelity and loyalty - but

(1) Wodrow vol.1. p.30.

(2) ibid. p.30.



but/

he gave no very definite assurance of the royal intentions regarding the settlement of Scotland's religious problems. During his several audiences the King concerned himself mainly with questions relating to Monck's plans and when Sharp offered to speak a word with reference to Scotland, the King declared that "he would reserve a full communing about that till his coming to England".<sup>(1)</sup> Sharp while claiming that the King was resolved "to restore the kingdom to its former civil liberties and to preserve the settled government of our Church",<sup>(2)</sup> spent a week in the company of the English ministers at the Hague. Baillie in his Letters maintained that "At this time it was Doctor Sheldon and Doctor Morley who did poison Mr. Sharp, our agent, whom we trusted" and certainly Sharp revealed in his letter to Douglas that he knew a good deal more than he cared to put into writing about the future ordering of religion. As far as Presbyterianism in England was concerned, he declared that "for me to press uniformity for discipline and government upon the King I would find a most

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.31.

(2) ibid. p.31.

most/  
disgusting employment -- for I know very few or none who  
desire it and whoever do report to you that there is a considerable  
party in England who have a mind for Covenant uniformity, they  
are mistaken". Whether or not Baillie and Douglas were right in  
their assumption that the continental trip marked the beginning of  
Sharp's defection from the Presbyterian ranks, it is clear that  
from this time he was a confirmed royalist - a position which in  
1660 involved support for a policy obnoxious to the Resolutioners,  
namely, royal control of both Church and State.

The Restoration.

On 29th May, 1660, four days after he had landed at Dover, Charles Stewart made his triumphal entry into London amid great demonstrations of public jubilation: and though to James Sharp the accomplishment of the restoration without bloodshed appeared "factum domini et mirabile in oculis nostris"<sup>(1)</sup>, there was, indeed little reason to fear opposition of a violent kind from a people tired of a rigid religious rule which interfered both with the private life of the individual and the public life of the state. As in London, so in Edinburgh where the new era was ushered in amid scenes of great drunkenness and immorality.<sup>(2)</sup> Many normally sober and respectable citizens exhibited their joy and proved their loyalty by turning "brutes for debauch, rebels and pugeants".<sup>(3)</sup> Nicoll recorded in his Diary how in Edinburgh on June 19th, the day set aside for public thanksgiving for the king's return, sermons were followed by feasting and heavy drinking, and the celebrations were brought to a close with a fireworks display on

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.21.

(2) Baillie: Letters. vol.1, p.166.

(3) Kirkton: p.65.

on/ (1)  
Castlehill which greatly amused the crowds.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, there had been a renewal of activity in ecclesiastical circles and a perfect spate of letters passed both ways between Sharp in London and his colleague in Edinburgh. That Sharp had made for himself a special niche at court is obvious from his references to the frequent audiences he had with the king during this period but it would be straining his influence too far to suggest that the king, or even Lauderdale, depended alone on Sharp for information or deferred to his judgement and advice on matters ecclesiastical. From the very day of the royal return there had been a steady stream south of impoverished Scottish nobility and hungry soldiers to swell the already considerable crowd of fawning petitioners at Whitehall around the

(2)  
new king but none of the Scottish nobles at Whitehall spoke out in favour of Presbyterianism - the king's personal views were too well known. Some of the 28 Scottish grandees were openly in favour of Episcopacy and those who professed to oppose its restoration

(1) Nicoll: Diary. p.294.

(2) Kirkton: History. p.66.



restoration/

in Scotland were, to Sharp's way of thinking, "upon a state interest rather than conscience, and all incline to bring our Church government to a subordination to the civil power".<sup>(1)</sup>

Writing to Douglas on 2nd June, Sharp warned his colleague of the growing antipathy south of the border towards Presbyterianism.

"From any observation I can make", he wrote, "I find the Presbyterian cause wholly given up and lost. The influencing men of the Presbyterian judgment are content with Episcopacy of Bishop Usher's model and a liturgy somewhat corrected".<sup>(2)</sup>

Already the Lords had agreed to restore the use of the liturgy in their daily devotions in the House, and Sharp believed that the Prayer Book would soon be restored for universal use. "The cassock men do swarm here; and such who seemed to be for presbytery, would be content with moderate Episcopacy".<sup>(3)</sup>

While at first sight this letter appears to be an impersonal record of the religious situation in London, there seems some ground for believing that Sharp intended Douglas to read between

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.45.

(2) MSS. Register of Consultations. vol.15. p.158.

(3) Wodrow. vol.1. p.33.

between/  
the lines and realise that he, Sharp, was himself one of  
the "influencing men" mentioned in the letter. He pointed out  
that "t'is our common interest to keep an equal way with all who  
mind the good of the kirk and the country", that it lay with the  
king "to do absolutely what he pleased in church and state," and  
that he himself was no longer able to be of use to the Presbyter-  
ian cause. If Sharp's zeal for the crown while at Breda had  
already raised Douglas's suspicions, this letter should have  
convinced him that, at the very least, Sharp's sympathy for the  
Presbyterian cause was on the wane. Yet when, in another letter  
of the same date, Sharp pressed his colleague to visit London  
speedily to "speak with his Majesty for the preventing of ill, and  
keeping of our noblemen here right",<sup>(1)</sup> Douglas first procrastinated  
and finally declined the invitation. Sharp opposed the sending of  
a commission of Resolutioners to the court, perhaps because he  
feared "like the Turk too many brothers near the throne", perhaps  
because he believed that Douglas could do more alone for the good

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.33.

good/  
of the kirk than all the rest put together.

It seems certain from these two letters that Sharp was now on the horns of a dilemma. On one side lay the opportunity of serving the Presbyterian cause - a very limited opportunity as Sharp's influence at court could scarcely have equalled that of the Scottish noblemen who shared in the king's affection nor have overcome the personal grudge which Charles himself bore the church which had forced him to accept humiliation and the Covenant - and on the other, the chance to serve the cause of religion in Scotland by re-establishing the church upon its ancient episcopal basis as subject to the royal will alone. While the first of those two options must have seemed to Sharp to offer no practical chance of success, the latter held out alluring possibilities of preferment and power: with Douglas at his side in London, Sharp would probably have continued the uneven struggle for the maintenance of Presbyterianism in Scotland - denied that prop, Sharp hovered for months in uncertainty with a foot in each camp before clutching the glittering bait of the archepiscopal throne.

throne./

Sharp's letter of 5th June to Douglas revealed all those fears and feelings. In it he declared that "If the King should be determined in matters of religion by the advice of the two houses, t'is feared that covenanted engagements shall not be much regarded' and "all that is hoped for is to bring them (the impetuous Episcopalians) to some moderation and closure with an episcopacy of a new make". Regarding his own influence, Sharp wrote "You may easily judge how little any endeavour of mine can signify to the preventing of this evil, and, therefore, how desirous I am to be taken off and returned to my charge."<sup>(1)</sup> He also mentioned two rumours then current in London - the first, which he hoped were true, to the effect that Douglas and Dickson were to make a visit to the capital; the second, which he regarded as a pretext for maintaining military rule in Scotland, that the Scots were all in arms for the covenant.

Meanwhile in Edinburgh Douglas and four of his colleagues, roused by Sharp's account of the state of affairs in England and

(1) Wodrow: vol.1. p.37.



and/  
 afraid lest their inactivity might be construed as mere  
 indifference, framed a joint reply on June 7th urging Sharp to  
 assure the English Presbyterians of their solicitude and to press  
 for the prevention of Episcopacy and the Liturgy. (1) A second  
 joint letter, dated two days later, instructed their representative  
 to lay the case for the covenant once again before the King. (2)  
 Regarding the rumour of their visit to London, Douglas declared  
 that neither he nor Dickson had ever any intention of making the  
 journey. As for Scotland being up in arms for the covenant, that,  
 Douglas confessed, was "a broad lie, when broadly rumoured". (3) He  
 thus incidentally revealed that there was quite a backing for  
 Episcopacy north of the Tweed.

In defiance of Douglas's instructions, Sharp continued his  
 policy of non-intervention in English religious affairs, and his  
 frequent letters - he dispatched one every second day to Douglas  
 throughout practically the whole of June - warned the Edinburgh

(1) MSS. Register of Consult. vol.15. pps.157-8.

(2) Wodrow: vol.1. p.35-6.

(3) MSS. Register of Consult. vol.15 p.164.

Edinburgh/

brethren "that our meddling with affairs will now be  
 useless, and of no advantage to our cause".<sup>(1)</sup> A month later, on  
 10th June, Sharp was still harping on the same note. "I am still  
 of the opinion, that there is neither necessity nor advantage to  
 meddle with the settlement, whether civil or ecclesiastical, here  
 in England. Dear bought experience should make us wary of mingl-  
 ing with the concerns of a people who bear no regard to us".<sup>(2)</sup>  
 By this time the Episcopalians in England had won the day and the  
 possibility of Episcopacy being introduced into Scotland now  
 appeared.

Sharp again and again bemoaned the presence of the vacillat-  
 ing Scottish nobility at court where they seem to have been very  
 much affected by the royal example. "I find a high loose spirit  
 appearing in some of them", he wrote, "and I hear they talk of  
 bringing Episcopacy into Scotland".<sup>(3)</sup> That Sharp himself -  
 probably because he was so often among the nobility at court -  
 must have felt himself under suspicion is obvious from the some-

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.38.

(2) MSS. Register of Consult. vol.15. p.192.

(3) Wodrow. vol.1. p.39.

somewhat/  
 overdone self-defence in his letter to Douglas of June 12th. "For my part", he said, "whatever constructions may be put on my way here, I have testimony (from the Presbyterian ministers in London) that my endeavours have not been wanting for promoting the Presbyterian interest according to the Covenant". It was part of his mission to speak with those of other churches and by so doing he exposed himself to criticism from both sides but, Sharp went on to state, "I am the less solicitous what usage I meet with, that I am assured my ends have been straight and if I have failed in any mean, it hath been through mistake, and not any dishonest purpose: I leave my reputation to the Lord".<sup>(1)</sup> Both the tone and the staccato style of the latter part of this letter reveal the tension in Sharp's mind but Douglas was evidently so blind to the real state of affairs that no further reference was made to the subject in his replies. Before the end of that month (June) suspicion was shifted to another quarter, Patrick Gillespie, the noted leader of the Protestors, now sought to win new prominence

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.41.

prominence/

in Scottish ecclesiastical affairs and dispatched his wife to London where she pressed Lord Sinclair and Lauderdale himself to take action on behalf of her spouse who "hath said as much to one of his confidants here as, if Bishoprics were to be dealt amongst us, he would take one of them" and would willingly help to introduce Episcopacy into Scotland where "he could do more for the king's interest than half the ministers of Scotland".<sup>(1)</sup>

Meanwhile in Scotland the demand for the calling of a General Assembly increased and Sharp was urged to press His Majesty for a decision. Charles, still uncertain as to his future action regarding Scotland discussed the matter fully with Sharp on several occasions and postponed the calling of an Assembly till after the Parliament had met. Sharp reported the king's unwillingness to be troubled with further delegations from the Resolutioners until the situation in the south was clarified and announced that the king wished him personally to convey to the ministers in Edinburgh a clear picture of the whole position. On the strength of this

(1) Register of Consultation of Edinburgh Ministers. vol.2. p.210.



this/

royal wish, the leading Resolutioners authorised Sharp on 21st June to return to Scotland but several weeks passed before their representative felt himself free to return.

In London Sharp found much to keep him busy, attending conferences with the King, the Scottish nobles and with the English divines; and it is easy to understand how strong the forces were at this time that lured him away from the Presbyterian fold. His English friends, Calamy, Manton and Dr. Reynolds were sworn in as Chaplains to the King in recognition of their willingness to co-operate with the Episcopalians, and doubtless Sharp already knew that a similar and even greater honour might be his, if he but followed their example. Yet he continued to protest his unswerving loyalty to Presbyterianism. "I trust when I return to make it appear, I have pursued the public ends of religion, as far as the condition of affairs would bear; and I have been biassed by no selfish ends".<sup>(1)</sup> This letter, dated 14th June, should have surely

awakened the Edinburgh brethren to the real threat to the church

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.42.

church/

of Scotland, for Sharp did not mince matters when he pointed out that "discerning men see the gale is like to blow for the prelatic party; and those who are sober will yield to a Liturgy and moderate Episcopacy, which they phrase to be effectual Presbytery: and by this salvo, they think to guard against breach of covenant".<sup>(1)</sup>

Five days later, in another letter to Douglas, Sharp went a stage further in disassociating himself from the over-rigid policy of the Resolutioners when he wrote "YOUR further interposing can do no good, but will probably bring hazard to the settlement among us".<sup>(2)</sup> He pointed out the example of Ireland which had sent commissioners to the King to beg that religion might be settled there according to the Episcopalian model in order to avoid schism and confusion - this, while the nobles of Scotland wrangled as to the procedure to be followed in the north! Before the end of June, Sharp, still at court, was openly refusing to carry out Douglas's instructions. "I cannot see how it is possible for me, or anyone else, to manage the business committed to me

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.43.

(2) ibid. vol.1. p.43.

me/

by your letter of the other week, with any shadow of

advantage". (1) He also warned Douglas that the Protestors were

meeting with unveiled hostility in the south and that harsh

penalties were likely to fall on those who had taken part in public

contests in England since 1640. "This", Sharp wrote, "will cast

a copy to the proceedings in Scotland". (2) - a surmise that proved

correct within a fortnight. Douglas, however, had already refused

to join with the Protestors in addressing a letter to the King

anent Episcopacy in England (3) and he showed little concern either

when Sir James Stewart, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and Sir

John Chiesly of Corsewell, two eminent Protestors, were seized on

instructions from London, or later, when on 23rd August, Guthrie

and other prominent Protestors were arrested in Edinburgh. (4) How

wide the rift was between the Resolutioners and the Protestors,

even in the face of the Episcopalian threat, is shown by the

persistent steps taken by Douglas to undermine the standing and

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.45.

(2) MSS. Register of Consult. vol.15. p.175.

(3) ibid. p.195.

(4) Register of Privy Council. Second Series. vol.8. p.465.

and/  
influence of Gillespie. Sharp was equally keen to discredit Gillespie at court, though his reasons were probably more selfish than partisan - he coveted for himself the bishop's throne.

While Sharp thus continued in London, Douglas and his friends pushed ahead with their preparations for the establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland. Douglas prepared and sent on to Sharp for presentation to the King a draft of a proclamation for an Assembly, which he hoped would be called as soon as a Scottish parliament had met. Charles, however, had "not yet considered how to manage his affairs in Scotland"<sup>(1)</sup> though Sharp, with his inside knowledge, was able to forecast the membership of the King's Council for Scotland at the beginning of July. "Middleton will be commissioner", he wrote to Douglas, "Glencairn will be chancellor, Crawford treasurer, Newburgh secretary, Sir Archibald Primrose register, Mr. John Fletcher advocate". How near Sharp's forecast was to the truth is revealed by the Privy Council Records - the

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.49.



the/

King appointed Middleton as his Commissioner, Glencairn was to be Chancellor, Rothes President of the Council of which Lauderdale was to be Secretary. (1) When pressed further by the select Committee of Scottish nobles to remit the government of Scotland to the Committee of Estates, Charles agreed, though reluctantly. (2) The old Committee of Estates, nominated by Parliament in 1651 was to be convened for 23rd August, the vacancies being filled up with proved royalists, while Parliament was to be summoned to meet in Edinburgh on 23rd October. (3)

Douglas, impatient at Sharp's delay in returning to Scotland once he had been granted permission, reprimanded Sharp in his letter of 12th July. "Your matters at London are yet a mystery to me" but Sharp fobbed him off by telling of a private conference he had had with the King in his closet "where I had the opportunity to gain a full information as to all those particulars you, by your former letter did desire; and, I must say, we have cause to

(1) Register of Privy Council. Third Series. vol.1. p.1.

(2) Acts of Parliament, Scotland. VI. Pt.2. p.679.

(3) MSS. Register of Consult. vol.15. p.202.

to/

bless the Lord for so gracious a King. A letter will be  
 writ in a day or two and I will get off".<sup>(1)</sup> That Sharp had a  
 hand in drafting the royal letter he openly admitted to Douglas  
 in his next note rehearsing the scope of his "six month's toilsome  
 employment". To allay any suspicions that might have made his  
 friend so critical, Sharp wrote that "there is a necessity I get  
 and keep acquaintance with the Episcopal party, as well as the  
 Presbyterian; and with those about the court who manage the King's  
 affairs though they may be no friends to Presbyterians, though I  
 will hereby be exposed to the constructions of men".<sup>(2)</sup> Sharp's  
 departure from London was further delayed until he had made sure  
 that the Committee of Estates would understand and implement the  
 King's wishes regarding the religious settlement in Scotland.  
 That accomplished, he collected a fraternal greeting from his old  
 friends, Calamy, Ash and Manton for their Edinburgh brethren; then  
 with the royal letter and a royal chaplaincy in his pocket, he set  
 out for Edinburgh which he reached on the last day of August.

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.51.

(2) ibid. p.51.

Sharp and the King's Letter.

On Saturday, 1st September, 1660, Sharp presented the King's letter to Douglas at a meeting of some of the brethren in Edinburgh and "made report of his negotiations in London, for the success whereof the brethren blessed the Lord, and for Mr. Sharp's great pains and care therein gave him hearty thanks".<sup>(1)</sup> When the Presbytery met on the following Monday there was further praise for Sharp and general jubilation over the warm tone of the royal message. Indeed "the ministers of Edinburgh were in such a great transport of joy upon the letter, they thought it not enough to praise it in their pulpits, but bought for it a silver box, a shrine for such a precious relic".<sup>(2)</sup> Strange behaviour on the part of those men who claimed for their church freedom from royal control, men who later were to charge Sharp with sacrificing his principles for the sake of kingly favour!

If, as Wodrow contends in the opening chapter of his History,

(1) Register of Consultations of Edinburgh Ministers. vol.2. p.221.  
 (2) Kirkton; History. p.76.

History/

Sharp was behind the rough usage meted out to the leading Protestors in Edinburgh on 23rd July - when Guthrie, Stirling, Trail and nine others were seized while innocently employed in drafting a loyal address to the Crown and flung into prison - there is no evidence to show that his fellow-Resolutioners were other than grateful to Sharp or that they resented the king's "resolve to discountenance profanity and all contemners and opposers of the ordinances of the Gospel", "who have disturbed the peace of that our Church".<sup>(1)</sup> Toleration was neither given nor expected in those days of sectarianism and Sharp's conduct was warmly applauded not only in Edinburgh but in the various Presbyteries throughout the country whence copies of the King's gracious letter were dispatched. The Synod of Lothian was alone in urging the King to adopt "the way of clemency and moderation towards the crowd of those who have been misled"<sup>(2)</sup> in a letter addressed on 10th September through Lauderdale.

But the marrow of the King's gracious letter was his Majesty's

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.81.

(2) MSS. Register vol.15. p.213.: Wodrow. vol.1. p.86.



Majesty's/

"resolve to protect and preserve the government of the Church of Scotland, as it is settled by law, without violation" - the ambiguity of the phrasing passed un-noticed in the first wave of enthusiasm and "the minds of the generality of ministers and people everywhere quieted, the pulpits resounding with thanksgiving and rejoicings to find our lawful King declaring his resolve to preserve and countenance the government of this Church".<sup>(1)</sup>

So wrote Sharp on 12th September to Lauderdale describing the reception of the letter in Scotland where the bulk of the clergy willingly acquiesced in the King's gracious pleasure. Not unmindful of Lauderdale's power as Secretary for Scotland, Sharp, with an eye to the future, went on to pay lavish tribute to that great man's good offices - "Your Lordship has the hearts and the prayers of all honest ministers and people here, who are very sensible how much they owe to your Lordship for what is done, and what cause we have all to depend upon your Lordship's favour towards us and this poor Church in the future" - and concluded the

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.2. Append. p.71.

the/  
 letter with an almost servile protestation of his loyalty -  
 "For myself.. I have looked upon it as one of the happiest provid-  
 ences of my life to be countenanced and owned with that favour  
 your Lordship has been pleased to allow me and rejoice in it as  
 the happiest lot I can wish if I may be continued in the same.  
 What I am or Have, I owe it to your Lordship".<sup>(1)</sup> Whatever else  
 may be doubtful - the wisdom of the Presbyterians in trusting  
 Lauderdale, or the unquestioning acceptance of the royal letter -  
 it is clear from the tone of his letter that Sharp had now decided  
 to throw in his lot with Lauderdale, and that involved, in time,  
 the overthrow of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland.

The other promises made in the King's letter of 10th August -  
 the speedy calling of a General Assembly and consultation with  
 Douglas and other ministers regarding the future of the Church in  
 Scotland - were never implemented. Douglas, indeed, pressed for  
 the calling of the Assembly and forwarded to Lauderdale a number

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.2. Append. p.72.

number/ of amendments and suggestions early in November,<sup>(1)</sup> but the latter confided to "his dear friend James Sharp, minister of the Gospel at Craill" that "the King will hear advice from Scotland before he indites a Draft of a Proclamation for calling a General Assembly".<sup>(2)</sup>

Even while the various presbyteries throughout the country were still loud in their praises and thanksgivings for the "warm beam of royal authority in countenancing Church order"<sup>(3)</sup> Sharp had embarked in company with Lauderdale on that course of vigorous persecution which in later years was to bring down on his head the curses and maledictions of his old co-religionists: but in 1660 it was Protestors whom he libelled and urged Lauderdale to attack. On September 19th, the Committee of Estates declared that the writings of Samuel Rutherford and James Guthrie were harmful to the established order and that their supporters would be punished. There followed, on the very next day, a "Proclamation against all seditious railers" which silenced any over-ready critics of the

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.35.

(2) Miscellany of S.H.S. vol.1. p.231.

(3) Wodrow. vol.1. p.82.

the/  
 new regime; and in the middle of October (the 17th) "Lex  
 Rex", Rutherford's pamphlet along with that of Guthrie, "The Causes  
 of God's Wrath" was publicly burned in Edinburgh by the hand of  
 the hangman. (1) Sharp, writing to Lauderdale towards the end of  
 the year, bemoaned the divided state of the Church in Scotland and  
 suggested a severity towards those "hairbrain" men, the Remonstrat-  
 ors, which at that time was not unacceptable to the Resolutioners.  
 "I fear", he wrote, "there can be no remedy against this malady  
 without exercising severity upon the leading imposters, Guthrie,  
 Gillespie, Rutherford, which will daunt the rest of the hotheads  
 who in time may be beat into sober minds and sober practises". (2)

Immediately after the Restoration, while still in London, Sharp  
 had endeavoured to secure an indulgence for Samuel Rutherford and  
 other Remonstrators, but, as he wrote to his friend Pat. Drummond  
 in London (11th December, 1660) "their principles, spirit and  
 actings have been so fatal to the quiet and honour of this poor  
 country, to the peace and reputation of this Church, as I am afraid

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.84.

(2) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.57.



afraid/

God hath some controversy against them: their folly of late hath and yet doth betray them to those inconveniences as are grievous to honest sober men here"<sup>(1)</sup>.. Here, then, in his experience with the Protestors lies the explanation of Sharp's later severity - moderation was regarded in this intolerant age as a sign of weakness and Sharp evidently was convinced that only rigorous persecution could bring unity and uniformity to the Church.

Before the end of October doubts began to grow in Scotland regarding the real purport of the royal letter and Sharp was regarded with suspicion by many who barely two months before had professed his friendship. Wodrow, wise long after the event, credits Middleton, who was aware of the King's intention to introduce Episcopacy into Scotland, with having flouted Sharp for penning the royal letter in such ambiguous terms as to deceive the Presbyterians and with saying "for his share he did not love that way, which made his Majesty's first appearance in Scotland to be in a cheat"<sup>(2)</sup>, while Burnet maintains that Middleton often spoke

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.41-2.

(2) Wodrow. vol.1. p.82.

spoke/

to Primrose of Sharp's duplicity with great indignation

"since it seemed below the dignity of a King thus to equivocate

with his people and to deceive them".<sup>(1)</sup> Whether those contentions

were true or not, it is certain that with so many Scottish gentry

dancing attendance on the King, the news of His Majesty's intentions

would soon reach Scotland and Sharp, self-admitted author of the

King's letter would immediately be under suspicion. Yet on 13th

December, Sharp while admitting that he had enemies and critics

in Scotland as well as in England, professed that he had "done

more for the interest of the Presbyterian government in Scotland

than any minister who can accuse me", and that "if any person in

England do say that I did engage directly or indirectly to endeav-

our the alteration of the government of the Church of Scotland,

they speak without ground from me and do me wrong".<sup>(2)</sup> Some

ministers, said Sharp, found fault with him because he had found

favour with the king and with Lauderdale; others blamed him for

wording the royal letter to create a wrong impression; while his

(1) Burnet: History. vol.1. p.198.

(2) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.47.

his/

English friends accused him of so fixing Presbyterian government in Scotland that for many years it were in vain to attempt the breaking of it. <sup>(1)</sup> To meet those jealous and carping criticisms Sharp declared that he sought to restore the King's interest to its lustre in Scotland and that he had repeatedly pointed out to his co-religionists that "the only way for the Church of Scotland to redemm themselves and their doctrine and practices from the imputations which lay upon them and to secure the order of this Church" was "to disown whatever had been prejudicial to the King's interest". <sup>(2)</sup> Five days later Sharp, again defending himself against charges affecting his integrity and reputation, wrote to Drummond "whenevr I design anything to the prejudice of the State or Church, I promise you shall be privy to it". <sup>(3)</sup> To Lauderdale, also on 13th December, he declared in no uncertain terms his loyalty to the Presbyterian cause and to the King. "I should prevaricate with your Lordship and be unfaithful to the King's service if from knowledge I have of the inclinations

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.46.

(2) *ibid.* p.48.

(3) *ibid.* p.55.

inclinations/ of ministers and people here, I should say attempts of introducing changes upon us will be welcome or prove successful; they speak without ground in my opinion who say that any considerable party among the ministers will appear for Episcopacy" and "I think the King's interest to be much concerned in having Scotland united in an entire obedience to his royal authority: nothing can be more prejudicial to this than the offering at this time to change the government of this Church".<sup>(1)</sup> Further evidence of Sharp's active concern, even at this date, for the Presbyterian form of Church government can be seen in the correspondence which passed between him and Lauderdale on the question of calling a General Assembly.

It is significant, however, that in spite of the criticism levelled at Sharp from all sides, fresh honours also came his way. At the beginning of December he modestly confided to Drummond that "they are renewing their invitations to me to enter the vacant place in the New College", a professorial chair at St. Andrews,

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.44.



Andrews/

and "I confess I incline rather to go thither than to  
Edinburgh"<sup>(1)</sup> - where he had been offered a pulpit; and on the  
last day of the year Middleton who had arrived in Edinburgh as  
Commissioner for the opening of Parliament, was pleased to send  
for Sharp whom he appointed royal Chaplain - an official post which  
gave Sharp daily access to the Court and hence an influence far  
beyond that of any other Scottish divine at that time - a double  
privilege which once again set tongues wagging.

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.42.

The Restoration of Episcopacy in Scotland.

Though the King had summoned the Scottish Parliament to  
 assemble on 12th December, 1660,<sup>(1)</sup> this meeting had to be delayed  
 because of important events south of the Border. Middleton, the  
 King's Commissioner, was briefed to repair to Scotland where he  
 was to "endeavour that our ancient and royal prerogative be assert-  
 ed and the just liberties of our people settled as they enjoyed  
 them under our royal ancestors according to law". Further, the  
 instructions went on, "because it is our resolution to settle our  
 kingdom in a firm and lasting peace, you shall give our royal  
 assent to such an act of oblivion as shall be drawn up by our  
 Parliament".<sup>(2)</sup> Burnet contends that Middleton was also instructed  
 secretly to discover quietly the popular feeling in Scotland  
 regarding Episcopacy.<sup>(3)</sup> On Hogmanay, 1660, the Commissioner with  
 Sharp in his suite, took up residence at Holyrood and next day he  
 rode in state through the crowded streets to the opening of the  
 first Scottish Parliament of the reign. Contemporary chroniclers

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.86.

(2) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.39.

(3) Burnet: History. vol.1. p.199.

chroniclers/  
 are as one in their outspoken criticism of this  
 extraordinary assembly ready to a man to sign away their birth-  
 rights for the sake of favour or preferment. "Never any parliament"  
 wrote Mackenzie, "was so obsequious to all that was proposed to  
 them".<sup>(1)</sup> Douglas, who was appointed to preach at the state open-  
 ing must have thundered in vain "Take heed what ye do: for ye  
 judge not for man, but for the Lord"<sup>(2)</sup> to a gathering so servile  
 that it accepted Middleton's suggestion that Glencairn, the  
 Chancellor, should preside even although Cassilis proposed the  
 appointment should be settled by vote.<sup>(3)</sup> Wodrow believed, not  
 without good reason, that "the design on foot in this Parliament  
 was to make the King absolute, and the laws henceforth only a  
 public signification of the sovereign's pleasure who after this,  
 is to be above law, and uncontrollable lord of his subjects'  
 property, purse and conscience; and to overturn what has been  
 formerly established in favour of religion and liberty".<sup>(4)</sup> Part  
 of the blame for this unhappy state of affairs he laid at the

(1) Mackenzie: History. p.19.  
 (2) 11 Chronicles. chap.19 verse 6.  
 (3) Baillie: Letters. vol.3. p.463.  
 (4) Wodrow. vol.1. p.90.

the/  
 feet of those corrupt preachers who had once sided themselves  
 with the Resolutioners but who were now carefully serving the  
 courtiers. Sharp, as royal chaplain, was one of the first to  
 be called upon to preach to Parliament. He "gave them two sermons  
 upon the last verse of the 18th Psalm - "Great deliverance giveth  
 he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and  
 to his seed for evermore" - sermons in which "I spoke my conscience  
 and, I hope, truths as to our deviations in our state actings from  
 our true interest, our fidelity to the crown and regard to the  
 honour and wellbeing of our country".<sup>(1)</sup> Sharp was aware that his  
 sermons had caused heartburnings and suspicion but by accepting  
 office as royal chaplain he had already shown where his real  
 affections lay, and he knew, moreover, what backing he could  
 expect from those in authority. Hearing that Parliament intended  
 to honour him publicly for his sermons,<sup>Ⓢ</sup> Sharp, to avoid illfeeling  
 among his coreligionists, particularly as Douglas had not been  
 thanked for his services, prevailed on some leading members to

(1) Lauderdale Papers, vol.1. p.61.

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Ⓢ Though there is in "Bishop Jolly's Kist," in the Episcopal College Library, Edinburgh, a single reference to "Sharp's Sermons - 6 vols.", the lack of confirmation in any other MSS. or printed source suggests that the sermons may be those of some other Sharp, possibly Archbishop John Sharp of York.



to/  
 stop the motion; but he could not prevent the Lords of the  
 Articles from ordering the publication of his sermons or Lauderdale  
 (1)  
 dale from asking for copies.

Though Sharp preached willing acceptance of the royal will,  
 he gave no public indication of the King's intention to restore  
 Episcopacy to Scotland. Repeatedly throughout January he told  
 Drummond that no change was intended. "The Commissioner", he  
 wrote on the 12th, "professeth he hath no purpose to meddle with  
 (2)  
 the Church", and ten days later, when describing his duties at  
 Holyrood as Middleton's chaplain he stated, "By any thing I can  
 yet perceive among them, I find no design to alter our Church  
 (3)  
 government". By this time, however, the work of the new Parlia-  
 ment had given an indication of the way the wind was blowing, and  
 even Sharp admitted, "I now begin to foresee a trial coming upon  
 (4)  
 this Church". Parliament began by drafting an Oath of Allegiance  
 to be taken by all state officials and members of Parliament

- (1) Miscellany. S.H.S. No.1. p.231.
- (2) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.62.
- (3) *ibid.* vol.1. p.68.
- (4) *ibid.* vol.1. p.72.

Parliament/

in which they each declared that "I acknowledge my said sovereign, only supreme governor of this kingdom, over all persons, and in all causes... and shall never decline his Majesty's power or jurisdiction, as I shall answer to God".<sup>(1)</sup> Members were not called upon to subscribe, as had been the custom, to the Covenant, and this roused the more far-seeing Presbyterians<sup>(2)</sup> who attacked Sharp as an "apostate cevenanter". As one act after another swept away the legal foundations of the Presbyterian Church, Sharp's attitude and position became more clearly defined and there can be no doubt that even while he was protesting, "more suo", his innocence to Drummond over the motion started by the Lords of the Articles for rescinding all the Acts of Parliament against Episcopacy and for Presbyterianism,<sup>(3)</sup> and quoting his frequent conferences with Douglas who "if he did distrust me, would not use me as he does"<sup>(4)</sup> as proof of his blamelessness, he was well aware of, if not actually the promoter of plans for the over-

(1) Acts of Parliament, Scotland. vol.7. p.7.

(2) Wodrow. vol.1. p.96.

(3) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.77.

(4) ibid. vol.1. p.85.

overthrow/  
 of the Presbyterian Church. Even as late as the second week in March he went along with Douglas for a private conference with Middleton in reference to church matters. They put forward at that time pleas that the acts against Episcopacy might not be rescinded, that a General Assembly should be called, and that "our church government might be kept without violation till a trial or experiment of our way for two or three years might be taken". (1)

Middleton, however, had received other instructions and discussed with some of his friends over their cups how the "King's darling design", the introduction of Episcopacy, should be carried out.

Sir Archibald Primrose, the Clerk-Register, advised him to bring in bishops surely but slowly, but Middleton replied, that "The Parliament was now at his beck, and he loved to serve his master genteely and do his business at one stroke". (2) And so, wrote

Burnet, "When they had drunk higher, they resolved to venture on it". (3) Primrose prepared a draft, and on 28th March that famous

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.85.

(2) Wodrow. vol.1. p.103.

(3) Burnet. History. vol.1. p.215.

famous/

Rescissory Act was passed, in spite of strenuous opposition, by a large majority, cancelling all legislation passed between 1633 and 1649, and so the civil sanctions of the Presbyterian Church were swept away. (1)

On the same day, another proclamation, attributed to Sharp by Baillie (2) - "for with him alone it pleased his Majesty to confer" declared the King's "full and firm resolution to maintain the true reformed Protestant religion, in its purity of doctrine and worship, as it was established within this kingdom, during the reigns of his royal father and grandfather of blessed memory" and "as to the government of the church, his Majesty will make it his care, to settle and secure the same, in such a frame as shall be most agreeable to the word of God, most suitable to monarchical government, and most complying with the public peace and quiet of the kingdom". (3)

The only sop to the Presbyterians contained in the proclamation was that, in the meantime, the King was

(1) Acts of Parliament, Scotland. vol.7. p.86. (Act 46)

(2) Baillie. Letters. vol.3. p.485.

(3) Wodrow. vol.1. p.102. and Acts of Parliament Scot. (Act 47)



was/

prepared to admit the existing administration of the church by sessions, presbyteries and synods, to continue provided they behaved themselves and kept within bounds.

Now indeed the storm broke and "many blamed Mr. Sharp, as the great court minister, by whose sole advice the King and the statesmen, both Scots and English, are put on and directed in their meddlings with our Church, but," said Baillie, who was indebted to Sharp for his appointment as Principal at Glasgow University, "I have always found him so kind a friend to myself, that I will be loath to admit such thoughts of him".<sup>(1)</sup> Sharp who had been relieved of his charge at Crail early in the year so that he might be installed in the Divinity Chair at St. Andrews,<sup>(2)</sup> and incidentally act as ecclesiastical adviser at court, professed to be scandalised by the Act Rescissory, and although admitting to Drummond that "It is all one to me to live under a regulated presbytery, or under a presbyterian presidency",<sup>(3)</sup> yet maintained that in "church

(1) Baillie. Letters. vol.3. p.468.

(2) Minutes of the Synod of Fife + Acta Rectorum.<sup>2</sup> (St.And.) vol.2. pl37

(3) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.88.

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@ Kalendis Martiis anno Domini, 1661, habitas Academiae Comitibus electus est Dominus Rector reverendus et clarissimus vir Doctor Jac. Sharpius S. Theologiae in collegio Mariano Professor".

"church/

matters all I have spoke to any, can amount to no more  
in the construction of the severest animadvertisers, than that the  
King's authority be owned "in ecclesiasticis", to which I find a  
general prepension among the best of our ministers".<sup>(1)</sup> Baillie  
was right when, in writing to his patron Lauderdale, he said, "If  
you or Mr. Sharp, whom we trusted as our own souls, have swerved  
towards Chancellor Hyde's principles, as now we see many do, you  
have much to answer for".<sup>(2)</sup> When Drummond wrote Sharp in a like  
strain, the royal chaplain declared, "I can with patience and  
hope commit myself, my credit, conscience... into the hands of  
my faithful creator, who knows my way and will bring my integrity  
to light".<sup>(3)</sup>

It is difficult, at this stage, to follow the workings of  
Sharp's mind and to understand his motive for further concealment.  
Until the spring of 1661 he had worked conscientiously  
and well for the Presbyterian Church but early in that year  
he had realised that were he to retain his favour with the

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.90.

(2) Baillie. Letters. vol.3. p.460.

(3) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.94.

the/  
 King, Clarendon and Lauderdale, "the person alive who has obliged me most, and to whom I owe and bear most honour and esteem and service next to my master the King"<sup>(1)</sup> he would have to support Clarendon's plan for the restoration of Episcopacy in Scotland. To Clarendon, that the Church and State should be one and equally under the control of royal authority was, in the interests of the Crown, a political necessity; and Sharp was acute enough to realise that were he to refuse his support others less scrupulous would be employed to carry through the scheme. Once his mind was made up to co-operate, sometime between the end of March and the 21st May, if the evidence of his letters is to be believed, there seems little justification for his deceit save perhaps to save his skin! While still in Scotland - he had preached before Parliament on the day of the King's coronation, before setting out in the company of Glencairn and Rothes for the capital on 29th May - he wrote to Baillie. "I am commanded to take a new toil, but I tell you it is not in order to a change of the

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.69.



the/

Church. I easily see what occasion of jealousies and false surmises this my journey will give, but whenever the Lord shall return me, I trust my carriage shall be such as my dear friend Mr. Baillie will not condemn me".<sup>(1)</sup> Sharp was right - his actions spoke more truly than his tongue or pen - and most of the Presbyterians were convinced that the Chancellor and President had taken Sharp to London "to be an agent betwixt them and Lauderdale who was said to be colder in pursuing Chancellor Hyde's designs in Scotland than some others".<sup>(2)</sup> Lauderdale, however, seems to have been a man of no fixed religious principles and though credited with having recommended Presbyterianism to the King, he proved ready enough at the King's bidding to "let that go, for it was not a religion fit for a gentleman".<sup>(3)</sup> So deep and widespread was Lauderdale's influence, that had he chosen to remain staunch to Presbyterianism, Sharp might never have been called upon to "crack his credit and prostitute his conscience". That Sharp did so, his letter to Middleton on 21st May leaves no doubt.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Baillie. Letters. vol.3. 460.

(2) ibid. vol.3. p.468.

(3) Burnet. History. vol.1. p.195. (4) Laud.Papers.vol.2. App.78.



In this letter, Sharp revealed how since the beginning of the year he had been party to the scheme for the overthrow of Presbyterianism in Scotland and how much his advice had been sought after and acted upon by Clarendon. It is clear too that in spite of his avowal to Drummond on 21st May, "I declare to you I have not acted directly or indirectly for a change amongst us, nor have I touched upon Church government in sermons or conferences at court or elsewhere", <sup>(1)</sup> Sharp had frequently discussed the whole question with Middleton - "I found that which your Grace was pleased often to tell me was not without ground". <sup>(2)</sup> Sharp throughout the summer was in constant conference with Clarendon and with the English bishops, and along with Lauderdale he drafted a proclamation with the object of "disposing of minds to acquiescence to the King's pleasure - till they be moulded". <sup>(3)</sup> This proclamation called forth a storm of protest from the Presbyterians, but the harsh treatment meted out to Argyle and Guthrie, who forfeited their lives, and to others in a less degree, served

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.89.

(2) Lauderdale Papers. vol.2. Append. p.79.

(3) *ibid.* vol.2. Append. p.80.

served/  
as a brake on all save the extremists.

According to Kirkton, Sharp was right in giving credit to Middleton for initiating the plan for introducing Episcopacy into Scotland when he wrote asking Middleton to be in Scotland when the actual introduction took place so "that the perfecting of the work may be upon your hand from whom it had its beginning and under whose countenance and protection it must thrive and take rooting"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The King, mindful of the Scottish opposition to the bishops in earlier times, was doubtful about the scheme and so was Lauderdale but "Middleton and Glencairn were resolute for bishops,"<sup>(2)</sup> and when Sharp added his weight by assuring Lauderdale that the generality of the ministers in Scotland would acquiesce in the King's gracious pleasure, then Lauderdale gave in: so did the King when told that public opinion had changed in Scotland because of the high-handedness of the Presbyterians. To Scotland where the Privy Council was now in control, Sharp returned on the last day of August passing "en route" Baillie's letter of reproach. "What you are

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.2. Append. p.80.

(2) Kirkton. History. p.133.

are/

doing there", (in London) the Principal wrote, "I can learn from no man, but diverse times since the King came home, by your letters, you made us confident there was no change intended for us. You were the most wise, honest, diligent and successful agent of the nation in the late dangers of our Church in Cromwell's time: your experience and power now is greater. In this very great danger I hope God shall make you as happy an instrument to prevent all our fears and to allay all our present sorrowful perplexities, as you have oft been before".<sup>(1)</sup> Poor Baillie's prayers were too late

for at the next meeting day of the Privy Council, 5th September, 1661, Episcopacy was discerned by the royal will to be the form of

<sup>(2)</sup> Church government for Scotland, and this momentous decision was conveyed to the people of Scotland at the market cross of Edinburgh on

<sup>(3)</sup> the following day. Presbytery was abolished, the proclamation declared because of the "unsuitableness thereof to his Majesty's monarchical estate". Eight months later, on 27th May, 1662, Parliament

finally approved an "Act for the Restitution and Re-establishment of

<sup>(4)</sup> the ancient government of the Church by Archbishops and Bishops".

(1) Baillie. Letters. vol.3. p.473.

(2) Register of the Privy Council. (3rd Ser.) vol.1. pps. 28-9.

(3) Nicoll. Diary. p.340.

(4) Acts. Parl. Scotland. vol.7. p.372.



Sharp's "volte face".

On the very same day the proclamation was made, Sharp wrote from the manse at Crail to his brethren on the local presbytery that he now upheld the royal authority in matters ecclesiastical - a step which served to fan the widespread rumour that he had already been appointed archbishop. Two prominent ministers, Mr. Robert Blair and a Mr. Forrest of Kilconquhar, were sent by the Presbytery of St. Andrews to take Sharp to task, but the latter was far too enamoured by the prospect of personal advancement under the new regime to yield to Blair's eloquence. (1) Public opinion in the capital at this time must also have buoyed up Sharp's hopes and conceit, for on 14th October, 1661, the Burgesses of Edinburgh decided that Mr. James Sharp, burgess and guildbrother, Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews, "be courteously entertained in the afternoon whereby opportunity may be taken to speak of the present condition of the ministry of this burgh who are like to come short of their maintenance". (2)

(1) Row's Blair. p.392.

(2) Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses. p.447.



Episcopacy had been restored by law, but it yet remained for the King and his advisers to appoint the bishops - that James Sharp himself should be appointed Primate of the Episcopal Church in Scotland was a foregone conclusion once he started touting vacant sees among his one-time Resolutioner associates. In a letter written to Brodie on 9th August, 1661,<sup>(1)</sup> Sharp sought to justify his action in trying to seduce his old friends from their allegiance to the Presbyterian Church with promises of preferment, by claiming the credit for keeping worse men out of office than those appointed. Robert Douglas was among those approached by Sharp, and both Wodrow and Kirkton have left vivid descriptions of that interview when Sharp tried, and tried in vain, to win over Douglas with the offer of the archiepiscopal throne. Finally, when Sharp in high dudgeon at this failure, was quitting the room, Douglas called him back with the words, "James, I see you will engage; I perceive that you are clear. You will be bishop of St. Andrews: take it, and the curse of God with it".<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Brodie. Diary. p.201.

(2) Wodrow. vol.1. p.228.

Douglas was correct in his forecast, for Sydserf, the only surviving bishop, was passed over in favour of the minister from Craill, who on the 14th November, 1661, was nominated by royal patent to the Metropolitan See of Scotland with all the rights, privileges and immunities of that high office - "ex autoritate regale, et potestate regia, certa scientia, proprioque motu".

Along with three other Scots who had accepted nomination for episcopal office - Andrew Fairfoul, the minister of Duns and bishop-designate of Glasgow, James Hamilton from Cambuskenneth who was to be bishop of Galloway, and Robert Leighton, ex-Principal of Edinburgh College who had been nominated bishop of Dunblane - James Sharp was instructed to proceed to London for the consecration ceremonies. Kirkton relates that while Fairfoul and Hamilton had been ordained during the earlier episcopal period, Sharp and Leighton had been ordained only in the Presbyterian Church<sup>(1)</sup> and Sheldon, the Bishop of London, who was to officiate at their consecration, refused to proceed until they had renounced their old

(1) Kirkton. p.136-7.

old/

Presbyterian ordination. Sharp pointed to the precedent afforded by the case of Spottiswood who had been elevated to the episcopal chair with only a presbyterian ordination in 1610; but when Sheldon remained adamant, Sharp, rather than forego his advancement, agreed to reordination, and so "with a great process of change of vestments, offices, prayers, bowing to the altar, and kneeling at the communion, they were reordained presbyters and consecrated bishops"<sup>(1)</sup> in Westminster Abbey on the 15th December, 1661... the solemn ceremony being followed, as was the custom, by a "fat episcopal banquet". Over three months passed before the four bishops began their homeward journey in a brand-new coach which Sharp had acquired as befitting his new rank and station; and it was early April before the Primate, who had left his colleagues behind at Morpeth on learning that a great reception had been planned for them at Edinburgh, was "seen riding in his coach in great state, with his purpured lacquays running at his coach and salutations he craves as due debt unto his greatness"<sup>(2)</sup> through

(1) Kirkton. p.137.

(2) Misc. Scotica. p.89.

through/  
 the streets of the capital. Burnet reports how hundreds  
 of enthusiastic supporters went as far as the Borders to welcome  
 Sharp who was received at the gates of Edinburgh by dignitaries of  
 both state and city, and led in triumph through the crowded streets (1)  
 A similar welcome awaited him in Fife where on his journey to St.  
 Andrews he was attended by between seven and eight hundred horse-  
 (2)  
 men.

Though public opinion is notoriously fickle and unstable, the  
 warmth of Sharp's reception both in Edinburgh and in Fife seems  
 to indicate that the restoration of Episcopacy in Scotland was far  
 from being universally unpopular, and that, apart from his oppon-  
 ents of long standing among the Protestors, and the extremists of  
 the Resolutioner party, Sharp himself was not severely criticised  
 for his "volte face" by the general body of the clergy or the  
 people. Indeed, there could have been little justification for  
 any criticism from the Resolutioners if the evidence of contempor-  
 ary writers can be accepted. In Row's "Blair" it is stated that

(1) Burnet. History. vol.1. p.252.  
 (2) Lamont. Diary. p.146.



that/

out of the six hundred ministers who in 1651 adhered to the Public Resolutions, all save forty conformed to Prelacy.<sup>(1)</sup> Grub in his "History" has pointed out that ten of the new bishops created at this time were Resolutioners.<sup>(2)</sup> Yet in spite of the fact that Sharp was only one among hundreds who turned to Episcopacy, subsequent historians, following the lead of biassed partisans like Wodrow and Burnet, have, for the most part, failed to consider even the possibility of Sharp being anything less than a traitor. He has been dubbed "a knave pur sang, and one who, to retain the price of his knavery, eagerly submitted to be cajoled, thwarted, bullied, or ignored, by bolder men as served their turn",<sup>(3)</sup> but, apart altogether from his later actions as Archbishop - actions which not unjustly made him the object of public odium - it is probable that Sharp's acceptance of the Primacy in 1661 was not dictated entirely by selfish motives of personal aggrandisement as his critics claim.

(1) Row's Blair. p.362.

(2) Grub. Ecclesiastical History. vol.3. p.197.

(3) Oswald Airy in Intro. to Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.X.

That James Sharp was genuinely anxious to help the cause of religion in Scotland cannot be denied - his devoted efforts in the service of the Church were publicly applauded time and time again - and such was the chaos existing in the Scottish Church at the time of the Restoration that only strong action and skilful leadership could have saved the Church from disintegration. Sharp, keyed up by his earlier successes, must have believed himself to be the heaven-sent leader, for in his first sermon preached at St. Andrews after his consecration, he used the text, "For I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified"<sup>(1)</sup>, as a peg on which to hang a vindication of himself and of the royal revival of Episcopacy. "His sermon did not run much on the words, but in a discourse of vindicating himself, and the pressing of Episcopacy, and the utility of it, showing, since it was wanting, that there hath been nothing but troubles and disturbances both in Church and State"<sup>(2)</sup>. There were, in truth, substantial grounds for Sharp's claim that the suspension of Episcopacy had led not

(1) 1st Corinthians. Chap. 2. verse 2.

(2) Lamont. Diary. p. 146.

not/

only to the outbreak of disorder and disunity within the Church of Scotland but also to the prejudice of the royal prerogative, the authority of parliament and the liberty of the subject.<sup>(1)</sup> During the second half of the sixteenth century and until Episcopacy was instituted by James I, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, more representative of the people than the Scottish parliaments of the same period, exercised a tremendous influence on public opinion and politics: even after the coming of Episcopacy, the leading clergy were still able to influence new legislation by the presence of the bishops in parliament. This powerful influence disappeared, however, during the struggle in Charles I's reign and throughout the Commonwealth, and, denied a legitimate voice in the affairs of the nation, the clergyman used their sermons and pamphlets to fan into flame many partisan riots and squabbles. The pulpit became the most popular vehicle for politics once the Kirk had been wracked by internal strife and controversy of a political origin. In the absence of any strong

(1) Mathieson. Politics and Religion in Scotland. vol.2. p.194.

strong/ unifying control in the Church, the various factions claimed for themselves a divine right greater than that of the Stuarts; and almost un-noticed, Popery increased in Scotland so that in 1660 Sharp felt relieved when Parliament resolved to "pass an excellent act against Popery".<sup>(1)</sup> The restoration of Episcopacy, then, must have meant to Sharp an end to the strife and bickering within the Church, for under the new regime, any disloyal clergymen would be branded as traitors, and the bishops, with the backing of the state, could wipe out all "hairbrain" men who professed antimagisratical and pernicious principles".<sup>(2)</sup>

Early in 1661, Sharp, in a letter to Drummond, pointed out that, "The drift of the most of this Parliament is to bring the ministry under beggary and the extremity of contempt."<sup>(3)</sup> He must have seen that the presence of bishops in parliament and in the Privy Council would prevent those two assemblies from humiliating the clergy and from making the Church wholly subservient to the state. No

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.70.

(2) *ibid.* vol.1. p.57.

(3) *ibid.* vol.1. p.69.



No/

matter how strong, then, Sharp's desire for personal advancement, there must have been at the back of his mind a consciousness of the great opportunity that lay to his hand to lift the Church above the petty bickerings of rival parties to a new unity and power under the royal protection. <sup>Ø</sup>

Nor was Sharp unaware of the widespread indifference towards religion that had developed in Scotland as a reaction to the over-rigid discipline of the Covenant. Even Douglas admitted early in 1660 that many of the younger clergy craved for some form of Episcopacy, <sup>(1)</sup> and Sharp knew from his frequent visits to the court that the nobility were little concerned to preserve a form of religion which imposed such severe restrictions on their pleasure and their ways of living. <sup>(2)</sup> Episcopacy meant for most of them, little more than the formal observance of certain recognised feasts and festivals of the Church favoured by the King. To the great mass of the people, the actual form of church government

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.21.

(2) *ibid.* vol.1. pps.45-6.

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Ø Among the Wodrow MSS in the National Library (Fol.27. No.68) are notes of a sermon preached by Sharp to Parliament after 1661 in which he declared that "The cementing of Presbyterie and Episcopacie together is no good expedient".

government/ was of little importance for in practice the Episcopal Church in seventeenth century Scotland differed very little from the Presbyterian; and after the troubles and contentions of the previous quarter century, the majority of people would not be unwilling to accept in Episcopacy an ecclesiastical constitution which held out possibilities of peace. (1) So that, apart from those extremist clergy and their followers who saw in the titles and powers of the bishops some threat to their accustomed ecclesiastical discipline and doctrine, there were few people in Scotland anxious to continue the religious war. Once episcopal severities had begun, public opinion hardened against the bishops but in the year 1661, as Sharp knew well, the people of Scotland were ready to sacrifice their personal preferences in their form of worship for a type of church government which would give them peace. Indeed, in the north country where Sharp had received his early theological training, Episcopacy survived the Cromwellian period and the

(1) Keith. Catalogue of Bishops. Appendix. p.492.

the/  
people of Aberdeen petitioned Parliament for the restoration  
of the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

If the ordinary folk laid little stress on the actual form  
of Church government, Sharp himself was hardly less indifferent.  
Churchmen down through the ages can be classified roughly into  
two groups - the devout evangelicals and the worldly-wise eccles-  
iastical administrators. James Sharp belonged to the latter  
group: the Church offered him an outlet for his special talents  
and ability; and in so far as the Episcopal Church offered him  
greater scope for his talents, the greater was its appeal for Sharp.  
His interest in the Church was academic and political rather than  
spiritual and he agreed with the opinion voiced by Gilbert Burnet  
in his pamphlet, "What opposition to the will of God or what harm  
to souls can flow from so innocent a practise, as the fixing of  
some Churchmen over others for observing, directing, reprov-  
ing, and coercing of the rest, that this should occasion such endless  
brawlings and such hot contentions".<sup>(1)</sup> Though Sharp claimed in

(1) Burnet. Vindication of the authority, constitution and laws  
of the Church of Scotland. Introduction.

in/ December, 1660, that he was a Scot and a presbyter, <sup>(1)</sup> he could never convince himself that Scottish Presbyterianism was "ex jure divine", <sup>(2)</sup> and must be credited with believing, as modern scholars do, in the primitive equation of bishop and presbyter. <sup>(3)</sup> Yet he was unable to accept without reservation, Leighton's golden rule that "the mode of Church government is immaterial" <sup>(4)</sup> for he resented the purely Erastian conception that the Church was merely a department of state under the complete control of the King.

What counted most with Sharp however, more than helping to restore the power and prestige of the Church, more than substituting one form of religion for another was the opportunity of advancing himself. Sharp was undoubtedly a placeseeker and opportunist, not overburdened with too strong a conscience, and loyal only so long as was expedient. To call Sharp "wicked" or a "traitor"

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.50.

(2) *ibid.* vol.1. p.88.

(3) J.King Hewison. The Covenanters. vol.2. p.74.

(4) Mathieson. Politics and Religion in Scotland. vol. 2. p.256.



"traitor"/

would be going too far, for as long as there was any prospect of upholding Presbytery, he clung to it and only changed sides when that prospect seemed hopeless. (1) Had he belonged to that group of ardent Covenanters of strong religious convictions, he might justly have been charged not with yielding prudently to the inevitable, but with surrendering his religious principles for personal aggrandisement. As it was, his spiritual shallowness combined with his lust for power to justify, in his eyes at least, the transfer of his loyalty when the cause of Presbyterianism seemed blackest. Sharp's greatest condemnation was not that he quitted the Presbyterian camp, nor that he accepted the Primacy -

(1) Burton. p. 294.

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@ Douglas professed himself willing to help maintain royal power without surrendering his Presbyterianism - Sharp's letter to Lauderdale, dated 9th September, 1661. (in Duke of Newcastle's MSS, No.35. National Library Collection) Sharp wrote - "I had the favour of your Lordship's letter with the inclosit to the ministers which I delivered to Mr. Douglas, who had the day before received his Majesty's letter, which he did humbly accept as a particular respect putt upon him, which I hope he will not abuse; but has professed to my Lord Chancellor and to me, that though he cannot in judgment give his approbation to episcopacy, yet he will in his way doe all the service to his Majesty by his endeavouring to dispose the ministers of a differing judgment to moderation and acquiescence in his Majesty declared pleasure".

Primacy -/ black though those steps proved him to his old associates - but that having secured for himself the highest office in the new Church, he ignored the many opportunities that lay before him of building up a strong national Church free from all the pettiness and political-mongering that had spoiled it in the past.

The Archbishop.

Their consecration ceremonies completed, Sharp and his fellows addressed themselves without delay to the business of restoring the episcopal form of Church government in Scotland. In London Sharp had the ear of the King and the effective part of the Privy Council, for, as has been pointed out, "It was this section of the Council in London and not the main body sitting in Edinburgh that inspired and directed its policy throughout the reign".<sup>(1)</sup> With Clarendon, Monck and Lauderdale at his back, Sharp had a royal letter<sup>(2)</sup> sent down to the Privy Council on 2nd Jan., 1662, prohibiting all meetings of presbyteries, synods and kirk sessions "until they be authorised or ordered by your Archbishops and bishops upon their entering into the government of their respective sees".<sup>(3)</sup> Within a week the Privy Council had issued a proclamation giving effect to this letter and Glencairn, the then Chancellor, had warned the sheriffs to convey the news to each minister within their area.<sup>(4)</sup> Thus Sharp, even before he ever

(1) Register of the Privy Council. (1661-4) vol.1. Intro.V1.

(2) Mathieson. Politics and Religion in Scotland. vol.2. p.194.

(3) Register of Privy Council. (1661-4) vol.1. p.126.

(4) ibid. vol.1. p.131.

ever/  
 reached Scotland, had begun to make his influence felt; and though those prohibitions raised some concern among the staunchest Presbyterian leaders - the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, indeed, sent two of their number to petition the lords of the Privy Council for "the removal of this bar that lieth in the way of address"<sup>(1)</sup> - the great majority of the clergy accepted the restrictions with good grace.

Early in April, Sharp, on his return from London, was received with great pomp and ceremony both in the capital and in Fife. He did not allow the festivities, however, to hinder the work of establishing episcopacy and within a month he had secured the cooperation of half a dozen Resolutioners who were prepared to serve under him as bishops. These men, Patrick Forbes, John Paterson, Murdoch Mackenzie, David Strachan, George Haliburton and Robert Wallace were consecrated in Holyrood Abbey on 7th May in the presence of Middleton, the King's Commissioner, a vast congregation of nobility and the Town Council of Edinburgh by the

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.251.



the/  
 two archbishops and the Bishop of Galloway. Sharp and Fairfoul were "resplendant in their pontificals, with their lawn sleeves, rochet, surplice and tippet"<sup>(1)</sup> to conduct the ceremony on the English model.

On the following day, when Parliament assembled for its second session, it proceeded to ratify the work of the Privy Council by giving legal form to the King's wishes. The first act of the new session restored the bishops as members of Parliament and the third invested them with "their accustomed dignities, privileges and jurisdictions".<sup>(2)</sup> The bishops were summoned from Sharp's lodgings near the Nether Bow and conducted with great ceremony to Parliament House where the act restoring them was read. Middleton treated the bishops to dinner and "did them the honour to walk down the street with them".<sup>(3)</sup> This "Act for the restitution and re-establishment of the ancient government of the Kirk by archbishops and bishops" which Sharp is believed to have draft-

(1) Row. Blair. p.406-7.

(2) Acts of Parlt. Scotland. vol.7. 370 and 372.

(3) Wodrow. vol.1. p.256.

drafted/

proved to be but the thin edge of the wedge, for, accord-

(1)  
ing to a contemporary statesman, two-thirds of the business of  
Scotland in Charles 11's reign related to the affairs of the Kirk  
and behind most of it looms the figure of the Archbishop of St.

Andrews. The Covenants and the Assembly of 1638 were condemned  
as unlawful and all persons in public office were obliged to sign

(2)  
a declaration renouncing them: failure on the part of ministers  
to attend diocesan synods when summoned or to observe the anniver-  
sity of the King's birth or restoration was to be punished with

expulsion, and it was made treason to deny or criticise the new  
episcopal regime either in pamphlet or in pulpit. (3) Patronage was

restored, and on 11th June 1662, an act was passed by which all  
ministers who had been appointed since 1649 were to be deprived

unless they received presentation from the lawful patron and were  
approved by the bishop before 20th September of that same year. (4)

(5)  
Undoubtedly Sharp intended this act to be used as a lever with

(1) Mackenzie. Vindication. p.12. (quoted - P.Hume Brown.  
History vol.2. p.393).

(2) Acta Parl. (Scot.) vol.7. p.378.

(3) ibid. vol.7. p.378.

(4) ibid. vol.7. p.376.

(5) Mathieson. Religion and Politics in Scotland. vol.2. p.191.

with/ discretion when difficult cases arose, as in the case of the three Edinburgh ministers who were deprived on 16th September for refusing to acknowledge the bishops. But he could hardly have foreseen the consequences.

In September, Middleton, to divert himself, made a tour in the west country <sup>(1)</sup> where Fairfoul, the Archbishop of Glasgow, complained that notwithstanding the Act of Parliament, none of the clergy would recognise him as a bishop <sup>(2)</sup> and although the majority of the ministers in the west were legally in need of presentation none would apply for it. At Fairfoul's instigation Middleton convened a special meeting of the Privy Council at the beginning of October and a fresh proclamation was issued prohibiting and discharging "all ministers who have contravened the foresaid act of parliament to exercise any function of the ministry at their respective churches in time coming, which are hereby declared vacant" and commanding "the said ministers to remove themselves

(1) Kirkton. p.148.

(2) Wodrow. vol.1. p.282.

themselves/

and their families out of their parishes, betwixt the

first day of November next to come".<sup>(1)</sup> Fairfoul had assured

Middleton that out of all the recalcitrant ministers not ten would

risk losing their stipends by withholding submission to the new

bishops; but in point of fact, 329 nonconforming clergy were now

deprived of their livings.<sup>(2)</sup>

Sharp, furious at this miscarriage of his plans, railed at

Fairfoul,<sup>(3)</sup> and complained to Burnet that he never imagined "so

rash a thing would have been done, till he saw it in print".<sup>(4)</sup>

Even Middleton was aghast at the extent of the opposition stirred

up,<sup>②</sup> particularly in the west, and prevailed upon the Privy Council

to secure the collaboration of Sharp in easing the situation. On

4th November, Glencairn dispatched a letter inviting the two Arch-

bishops to advise the Council regarding those parishes from which

the ministers had been excluded:<sup>(5)</sup> and two days later a special

committee was appointed to confer with the archbishops.<sup>(6)</sup>

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.282-3. Register of Privy Council, vol.1.254.

(2) Mathieson. Politics and Religion in Scotland. vol.2. p.193.

(3) Kirkton. p.150.

(4) Burnet. vol.1. p.278.

(5) Register of Privy Council. 3rd Ser. vol.1. p.273-4.

(6) *ibid.* p.279.

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② - 46 out of 109 in the Synod of Lothian, 29 out of 69 in Fife!



archbishops./

Blair maintains that a cabal composed of Sharp, Middleton, Glencairn, Primrose and Fletcher the Lord Advocate "sat in a close cabin council, plotting and contriving all things. Immediately thereafter summonses were issued out for sundry ministers to appear before the Privy Council"<sup>(1)</sup>, which sentenced Mr. John Livingstone of Ancrum, Trail and half a dozen other nonconformist ministers to banishment.<sup>(2)</sup> But at the instance of Sharp, the majority of the excluded ministers, those whose churches had not already been filled, were given till the following February to comply with the conditions of the Glasgow Act, by a proclamation of the Council issued on 23rd December.<sup>(3)</sup> By this same document absentees from the autumnal synods were "confined within their several parishes until the next meeting of the synod" and forbidden to "transgress the bounds of their confinement unless upon application to the bishop they receive warrant".<sup>(4)</sup> Sharp probably pressed for this measure as a result of his experience

(1) Row: Blair. p.430. Register of Privy Council. vol.1. 301.

(2) Register of Privy Council. vol.1. p.302.

(3) *ibid.* p.302.

(4) Wodrow. vol.1. p.285.

experience/

at the Diocesan meeting at St. Andrews on 12th Sept.

when at least thirty five members were absent. At this synod,

Sharp "laboured to persuade them that came, that he was to innov-

ate nothing, save only he declared it was the King's will that

they should forbear lecturing and only read scripture to the people<sup>(1)</sup>

Meanwhile trouble, in which Sharp was involved, developed between Middleton and Lauderdale both of whom wanted to be supreme in Scottish affairs. Taking advantage of Lauderdale's absence in London, the Commissioner pushed through an Act declaring it -

"compulsory for every person holding office to declare that the

two Covenants were unlawful and seditious"<sup>(2)</sup>, hoping in this way

to secure the dismissal of his rival who had been a Covenanter,

but Lauderdale, too wily a bird to be so easily caught, declared

that he would "sign a cartful of such oaths before he would lose

his place"<sup>(3)</sup> and Middleton was forced to try a more hazardous plan.

He induced the King to sanction the exclusion from public office

(1) Row: Blair. p.426.

(2) Acts of Parliament. Scotland. vol.7. p.406.

(3) Mackenzie. p.65.

office/

of any twelve persons whom Parliament should select, by secret ballot, as dangerous to the state and planned to include Lauderdale's name in the list of the proscribed. Blair maintains that Sharp wrote a letter to the King in Middleton's favour and that Lauderdale intercepted it. When the Archbishop on a visit to Lauderdale professed his loyalty, the latter produced Sharp's letter and "it was reported that though the King did still affect Episcopacy, yet his affection towards Sharp was much abated, perceiving him a self-seeking man, and one that could lie".<sup>(1)</sup>

It would seem, however, that on this occasion Blair must have been misinformed, for the Lauderdale Papers reveal very clearly that, when the Act of Indemnity was before Parliament in September 1662, Sharp "did not vote to the Act and could not help what was done this day, though he is confident in this, there is no hazard for Mr Red (Lauderdale) though he would have him upon his guard".<sup>(2)</sup>

Sharp, who was one of the tellers appointed to scrutinise the billets must have passed on the proscribed list to his brother,

(1) Row: Blair. p.436-7.

(2) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.109.

brother/

William Sharp, Lauderdale's confidential agent in Scotland, for, as he said, "This came to knowledge strangely, I need not now tell it"<sup>(1)</sup>, and the whole scheme was laid bare. A month later, Lauderdale, replying to Sharp who had written apologising for being such a poor correspondent, wrote, "to quarrel for a ceremony is not my custom. Much should I be blamed if I took such a punctilio ill from a friend who hath proved a friend when I was endeavoured to be soundly banged with billets"<sup>(2)</sup>. Meanwhile, in London, Lauderdale, at the King's side, quickly turned his Majesty against Middleton who in March, 1663, was deprived of his office as Lord High Commissioner. Sharp, far from losing royal favour, was well received at court when he paid a visit to London in the spring of 1663, and at home in Scotland, the Privy Council relied more and more on his advice in ecclesiastical problems so that it could have occasioned little surprise when on 4th June, the King wrote to the Council to the effect that "we, being most

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.112.

(2) Miscellany, S.H.S. vol.1. letter 4.



most/  
confident of the fidelity and affection to our service of  
the most reverend fathers in God, the Archbishops of St. Andrews  
and Glasgow, have thought fit to add them to our Privy Council<sup>(1)</sup>".  
With Sharp's admission to the Council there began a new phase in  
his career and a new period of ecclesiastical tyranny in Scotland.

(1) Register of Privy Council. 3rd Series, vol.1. p.382.

The Privy Councillor.

For four years from the day of his admission as a Privy Councillor until the death of Clarendon robbed him of a strong stay at Whitehall, Sharp was the most powerful force in Scottish affairs. The decision of the Scottish Parliament at the end of July, 1663, "That this kingdom return to the good old form of government by his Majesty's Privy Council"<sup>(1)</sup> played into his hands for as two-thirds of the business dealt with church matters, his voice became, increasingly, the decisive one in the Council. As Blair put it when referring to the act suspending those ministers who had not attended the Episcopal synods, "This wilely, but wickedly contrived censure was thought to be the brood of Sharp's brain, whose word was a law to the secret Council, none daring to oppose what he proposed".<sup>(2)</sup> Rothés, the new Commissioner, took his cue from Lauderdale, and he, still mindful of Sharp's help earlier in the year, assured the Archbishop of his backing. "I

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.172.

(2) Row: Blair. p.446.

I/  
 need not tell you", he wrote on February 4, 1664, "when I shall  
 receive any of your commands, they shall receive ready obedience"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Had Sharp used his great powers in Church and State wisely, had he treated with moderation his one-time Presbyterian friends, his name might have come to be honoured, not anathema, in the annals of Scottish Church History: but with his experience of many years' wrangling in the service of the church behind him, the Primate decided on a course which in time made even Lauderdale fear for him. One act of persecution and restriction followed another in quick succession and when even the Privy Council began to demur, Sharp posted to court where he complained of such remissness in the Council that "unless some more spirit were put into the administration, it would be impossible to preserve the Church"<sup>(2)</sup>. He prevailed upon the King to revive the High Commission Court so that Church affairs, at least, would be promptly and effectively dealt with, and returned to Scotland with a royal commission on 16th January, 1664, for establishing such a court to continue

(1) Miscellany S.H.S. vol.15. letter 6.

(2) Burnet. Vol.1. p.301.

continue/  
 during his Majesty's pleasure. (1) Within a few days,  
 there arrived a further letter from the King to the Privy Council  
 declaring, "our pleasure is that he (the Archbishop of St. Andrews)  
 have the first place both at our Council and at all public meet-  
 ings before our Chancellor and all other subjects within the  
 Kingdom". (2) - a promotion which did not add to Sharp's popularity  
 with Glencairn and the rest of the Scottish nobility.

The High Commission Court established under Sharp's aegis at  
 the beginning of 1664 soon set to work against the Presbyterian  
 nonconformists. The methods followed were "altogether arbitrary,  
 disdaining all the usual formalities and maxims of law"; (3) victims  
 were often seized without being informed of the cause and perse-  
 cuted without written indictment by judges who did not hesitate  
 to depart from the specific charge or to inflict punishments of  
 the utmost severity. When, for example, some of the parishioners  
 of Ancrum ventured to remonstrate against a minister forced upon  
 them by the bishop, two of their number by the name of Turnbull

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.384-5.

(2) Register of Privy Council. vol.1. p.490.

(3) Lee. vol.2. p.329.



Turnbull/  
 were "scourged through the streets of Edinburgh, burnt  
 in the face with a hot iron, and then sold as slaves to Barbadoes"<sup>(1)</sup>  
 while their sister was whipped through the streets of Jedburgh.  
 So notorious did the court become that, even in an age famous for  
 its lack of human kindness, some of the lay commissioners, nobles  
 and gentry, refused to take part in any of the proceedings; many  
 nonconformists, when summoned to appear before the hated court,  
 risked the threat of outlawry rather than obey; "and in about a  
 year and a half's time, our bishops could neither find judges to  
 join with them, or parties to appear before them",<sup>(2)</sup> with the  
 result that, within the course of two years from its inception,  
 Sharp's court was allowed to expire.

Meanwhile, in the Privy Council, Sharp aspired to fresh  
 honours and further power, for following the death of Glencairn on  
 30th May, 1664, he began to angle for the vacant Chancellorship.  
 He wrote a personal letter to Sheldon urging the latter to recom-  
 mend him to the King for the vacant post, but the Archbishop of

(1) Wodrow. vol.1. p.394.

(2) ibid. vol.1. p.390.

of/

Canterbury, probably at the King's suggestion, tried to cool Sharp's ambition and pressed him to refrain from making a visit to London at that time. Sharp, however, anxious for the Chancellorship, posted to Whitehall and sought by roundabout methods to change the King's decision. "When the King, to try him, offered the Chancellor's place to him, he refused it",<sup>(1)</sup> professing his unworthiness, but all the while he pleaded with Sheldon to intercede on his behalf. He even invoked the help of Rothes to secure the appointment and the Commissioner wrote to Lauderdale on 1st July, "I positively assert nothing could so much establish and secure the peace and quiet of the Church as if the King would be pleased to pitch on my Lord St. Andrews for the discharge of that employment".<sup>(2)</sup> Charles, however, refused to be hustled and it was not till after Clarendon's death that Rothes, who had lamented the failure of Sharp's suit - "I am sorry from my heart that the business in which I humbly conceive there is so

(1) Row: Blair. p.473.

(2) Ad. MSS. 23. 123. f.100. (Brit. Mus.)

so/

much advantage to the peace and tranquillity of this poor

country should stick", - <sup>(1)</sup>Rothes was himself appointed Chancellor.

Denied the office, James Sharp yet wielded the power, <sup>7</sup>for  
on 3rd November, 1664, "The Lord Commissioner, his Grace, nominat-  
ed and appointed the Lord Archbishop of St. Andrews, his Grace,  
to be praeses of the Council for the time" <sup>(2)</sup> and Sharp addressed  
himself with even greater vigour and unity of purpose than before  
to the task of bringing the nonconformists to book. With the  
object of curing or crushing disaffection towards the Episcopal  
regime, Sir James Turner had been dispatched with troops to deal  
with offenders against the new ministers introduced by the bishops.

(1) Ad.MSS. 23. 123. f.133. (Brit. Mus.)

(2) Register of Privy Council. vol.1. p.610.

@ Sharp wrote to Lauderdale on 21st July, 1664, complaining -

"I found not heer (Edinburgh) that activitty and zeal for the King's service which was necessary for the suppressing that spirit of faction and sedition which had taken place amongst us, and since I perceiv that the apprehensions which are generally had of that remissness and indifferency as to the concerns of the Church is visible in the Councils and actings of those who are intrusted with the execution of the laws, gives encouragement to ill-principled and disaffected people to persist in this contumacy. I was bound in conscience and duty to give notice of this, that the spreading of this gangrene of separation from the Church and alienation from the King might be in time prevented by a speedy application of proper and effectual remedies".

(from Duke of Newcastle's MSS, No.69, in National Library,  
Scotland.)

bishops./

So unsettled was the west country that Sharp, taking advantage of the war with the Dutch which he said would give the recusants a chance to rise in rebellion, secured the backing of the King in the raising of a small military force under the leadership of those two "persons of very great integrity and worth",<sup>(1)</sup> Sir Tam Dalyell and Colonel Drummond. The spate of anti-presbyterian legislation and the vicious methods of Turner and his troops did at last force the recusants to rebellion. Capturing Turner, who was lying ill at Dumfries, the Whiggamores marched via Ayr and Lanark to Bathgate hoping to secure further backing in the Lothians. Meanwhile Sharp, in the Commissioner's absence, sent out a letter in the name of the Council to the nobles and gentry "to come in with their friends and followers, with horses and arms, to defend the town of Edinburgh, so that the King's authority may be defended from rebellious and disaffected persons now in arms."<sup>(2)</sup> Actually, Edinburgh was in little

(1) Burnet. vol.1. p.389.

(2) Wodrow. vol.2. p.20.



little/  
 danger, for lack of support and miserable weather forced the rebels to fall back towards the west closely pursued by Dalrymple who overtook them on 28th November at Rullion Green with most disastrous results for the Covenanters. After being huddled together in Haddock's Hole, nearly three dozen of the ringleaders were hanged after being tortured in the boots by order of the Privy Council which ordained on 6th December that, "the heads of the persons underwritten be cut off and affixed at the following places", and on the same day orders were issued that the right arms be struck off other prisoners who had sworn to defend the Covenant at Lamington. It was obvious that "the prelates resolved to use all severities and to take all imaginable cruel and rigorous ways and courses, first against the rest of the prisoners and then against the west of Scotland". (1) Wodrow maintains that the King sent down a letter to Sharp instructing that no blood be shed on account of the Pentland Rising and that the Primate withheld the letter "till as many, as he had a mind

(1) Row: Blair. p.504.

mind/ should die, were dispatched", <sup>(1)</sup> but Burnet states that Archbishop Burnet of Glasgow was responsible for holding up the letter till Hugh McKail was executed. <sup>(2)</sup> Whichever version be true, it was an unhappy chance that at such a crisis and when such a merciless policy was being pursued by the Privy Council, the President of that body should have been the chief ecclesiastic of Scotland: and even although Sharp absented himself from Council meetings on occasion of the tortures - Blair holds that it was Sharp's "ordinary deceitful policy and trick after he had plotted and contrived great wickedness and severities.. to withdraw and come to St. Andrews and after the mischief was acted, to say he was free of it, he was not there, etc." <sup>(3)</sup> - in so far as he certainly never interceded for any of the victims, he must bear much of the blame for their cruel treatment. In all these severities, Sharp had the backing of Rothes who went so far as to say to Lauderdale on 17th December, that "these people will never

(1) Wodrow. vol.2. p.38.

(2) Burnet. vol.1. p.348.

(3) Row: Blair. p.506.

never/  
be quiet until they be totally ruined". (1)

It was inevitable, however, that the news of such severity should, in spite of Sharp's letters advising the King that all was well in Scotland, cause some alarm at court and when, in the mid-summer of 1666 Sharp ventured to complain to the King that Lauderdale often withheld his support, the Scottish Secretary took action. The King requested Sharp to confine himself to his own

diocese and not to come to Edinburgh. (2) Rumour had it that

the Duke of Hamilton was to replace Sharp as President of the Convention of the Estates. The Episcopal army was disbanded by

royal instructions in August, 1667, and a more conciliatory regime initiated by the King's letter of 1st October recommending that

"all prudent and effectual course may be pursued for the peace

and quiet of the Church and for obedience to the good laws anent". (4)

Finally, to complete Sharp's humiliation, Rothes, who described the Primate at this time as "stangely cast down, yea, lower than

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.1. p.263.

(2) Burnet. vol.1. p.438.

(3) Wodrow. vol.2. p.89.

(4) ibid. vol.2. p.91.

than/ (1)  
the dust", Rothés was appointed Chancellor and Sharp had  
to surrender the Great Seal which he had held as President of  
the Privy Council, to him.

(1) Mathieson. Politics and Religion. vol.2. p.216.



Tyranny.

Had the acquisition of political power provided the sole motive for Sharp's acceptance of the Archbishopric, then the events of 1667 - the loss of royal favour and the subsequent humiliation must perforce have convinced him that his brief supremacy was at an end; and even although January, 1668 brought him a royal letter which to him was "as a resurrection from the dead"<sup>(1)</sup> inviting his continued cooperation in church affairs, yet from that time on, Lauderdale was supreme and even in church matters, Sharp's power was curtailed. With the political motive removed, it must be assumed that the Primate genuinely wanted to see religious uniformity in Scotland for although anxious to retain Lauderdale's favour - he supported Lauderdale against Archbishop Burnet of Glasgow who strongly opposed any Indulgence to the presbyterians<sup>(2)</sup> and lost his see as a result<sup>(3)</sup> - Sharp pursued in the period that followed, his anti-presbyterian policy without loss of vigour or with any increase of toleration.

(1) Lauderdale Papers. vol.2. p.93.

(2) ibid. vol.2. p.138-9.

(3) Wodrow. vol.2. p.144.

Finding that his policy of conciliation had little effect - indeed, the Privy Council was forced to set up a special sub-committee under Sharp on 6th April, 1670, to look into the increase

(1)  
of conventicles - Lauderdale, "to ingratiate himself with the prelates, renewed the severities against the presbyterian outed

(2)  
ministers" and secured the passing of a "clanking act" when the

Parliament met at the end of July, making it an obligation on everybody to depone against nonconformists. Sharp's committee

was kept very busy, imposing heavy fines for non-attendance at episcopal services or for attendance at field conventicles. Nor

did Sharp's zeal stop there. The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Sir

Andrew Ramsay, complained to Lauderdale that in the capital where six churches each supported two ministers, there was need for new

blood but "none shall come here but by the advice of my lord St.

(3)  
Andrews" and when on 2nd December, 1671, the King sent down a

(4)  
warrant for the filling of four vacant bishoprics, Kincardine

(1) Wodrow. vol.2. p.160.

(2) ibid. vol.2. p.164.

(3) Laing MSS. p.371.

(4) Calander of State Papers (1671/2) p.2.

Kincardine/

anxious to see the vacancies filled, wrote to Lauderdale, "I shall strive to sound Archbishop St. Andrews concerning the filling up of the vacant bishops but he is so out of tune at present and so alarmed in his old manner as if all were lost and nothing but rank presbytery designed to be brought in".<sup>(1)</sup> Sharp held up the appointments till he found men he could trust. Not content with controlling new appointments, the Primate intervened when Blair, the minister at Galston, refused to celebrate the anniversary of the King's birthday. Blair was called before the Privy Council where he enraged Sharp by declaring "I can receive no instruction from you for regulating the exercise of my ministry."<sup>(2)</sup> He was held in prison till his health broke down.

Keen though he was to force the episcopal form of government on the Scottish Church, Sharp made no attempt to interfere with the doctrine or ritual of the presbyterian church for, indeed, there was scarcely any outward distinction between the two churches in faith, worship or discipline,<sup>(3)</sup> and no moderate presbyterian

(1) Laing MSS. p.381.

(2) Wodrow. vol.2. p.216.

(3) Keith's Catalogue. p.492.

presbyterian/  
 scrupled to attend episcopalian worship or to take  
 communion in the parish church. "So very careful was the Episcopal  
 Church of Scotland not to give offence to the Presbyterians that  
 she became little more than Presbyterian herself to reconcile  
 that party to her".<sup>(1)</sup> Grub maintains that as far as doctrine was  
 concerned, the Scriptures and the Apostles' Creed were the only  
 standards for both churches; and doubts if the Book of Common  
 Prayer was used even in the Chapel Royal.<sup>(2)</sup> In 1663 the King  
 went so far as to order the preparation of a liturgy and canons  
 but the work, though begun, was never completed; and even though  
 Lauderdale pressed Sharp and his fellow bishops to push on with  
 the work in 1672,<sup>(3)</sup> they were more concerned with preventing the  
 calling of a National Synod than with drafting new liturgies.

It was this question of a national synod that first brought  
 to light serious divergence of opinion within the episcopal hier-  
 archy. Early in 1674 some of the bishops began to complain "that  
 the church was not governed in an ecclesiastical way, but in a

(1) Morer. Short Account of Scotland. p.54.  
 (2) Grub. p.216-7.  
 (3) Wodrow. vol.2. p.309-10.



a/  
 most arbitrary method; that Archbishop Sharp acted as a pope, and in council or out of it, managed the affairs of the church, without so much as noticing the rest of the prelates; and that though there was a law for a national synod, yet none had been permitted by his influence".<sup>(1)</sup> The leader of this opposition party was Bishop Ramsay of Dunblane, and he had the support of the Bishop of Brechin and several prominent Edinburgh ministers. The critics, however, underestimated the power of the Primate who soon secured the backing of both Lauderdale and the King. Sharp wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking him to enlist the sympathy of the King and complained that one of the Edinburgh ministers had called him a "great grievance to the Church". Sancroft took immediate action and when the news reached the court of this "factious and undutiful deportment of some of the clergy", Charles wrote Sharp from Windsor Castle recommending the translation of Ramsay from Dunblane to the Isles, the rustication of Brechin and

(1) Wodrow. vol.2. p.300.

and/ (1)  
the suspension from preaching of their Edinburgh confreres.

A week later, on 24th July, 1675, another royal letter ordered  
Sharp to wait on the King with convenient speed. (2) He took with  
him a draft constitution for amending the discipline of the church  
which Charles graciously accepted; and, assured of the royal protection and support, the Primate returned to crush criticism  
within the episcopal ranks and opposition from the presbyterians.

It was inevitable that Sharp's excessive severity and repressive measures should pass without attempt on the part of the nonconformists at reprisal. One of his last actions as Praeses of the Privy Council was to order on 12th December, 1667, that the pamphlet "Naphtali" be "publicly burned in the High Street of Edinburgh near to the Merkat Cross thereof, by the hand of the hangman" (3) - a proceeding which, according to the Earl of Kincardine, "but made people more curious about the contents of the book" (4), and roused the indignation of the Covenanters, one of

(1) Calendar of State Papers. (1673-5) p.309.

(2) *ibid.* p.318.

(3) Register of Privy Council. vol.2. p.375.

(4) Laing MSS. vol.1. p.382.

of/

whom, James Mitchell, made an attempt on Sharp's life the following summer. While Sharp and Honeyman, Bishop of Orkney, "were taking coach at the lodgings of the Archbishop (at the head of Blackfriars' Wynd, Edinburgh) on 11th July, a young gentleman fired a pistol with five or six bullets at the Archbishop but missed him... He escaped down Blackfriars' Wynd, but was posted after in all directions"<sup>(1)</sup> Though Sharp escaped injury, Honeyman's left arm was broken at the wrist, and this "rash, unchristian and desperate attempt proved very unlucky to Edinburgh being the cause of meikle trouble to honest people there"<sup>(2)</sup> A superficial search yielded nothing, for although a fellow in clothes similar to those worn by the would-be assassin was apprehended at Corstorphine, he was rescued by the Laird of Forster and on 14th July, the King issued a proclamation for the apprehension of the person guilty of the offence and offered 2,000 merks Scots to any accomplice who offered information.<sup>(3)</sup> Many Edinburgh people were seized in

(1) Calendar of State Papers. (1667/8) p.487.

(2) Row: Blair. p.518.

(3) Cal. of State Papers. (1667/8) p.487.

in/

connection with the affair - on July 22 the Privy Council decided that Anna Kerr should be "Tried by torture of the 'boots' at five o'clock in the afternoon" if she failed to make a declaration about the assassin, and a week later, as she still remained obdurate the Council ordered her "to be banished his Majesty's dominions never to return on pain of death", <sup>(1)</sup> a fate shared by Janet Chalmers for a like cause on 30th July.

In spite of these tortures four years passed before even the name of the assassin was publicly known; but in 1672, one of the fellows taken prisoner for robbing Conformed ministers' houses in Glasgow "acknowledged that he knew the man that shop at the Bishops of St. Andrews some time ago, one Mr. James Mitchell, who was a Nonconformist chaplain - a thing hitherto never discovered". <sup>(2)</sup> Two years later, on 10th February, 1674, Mitchell was apprehended and brought before the Privy Council. At first he "denied the assassination but being taken apart by the Chancellor, upon assurance of his life, he fell upon his knees and confessed". <sup>(3)</sup> Afterwards

(1) Register of Privy Council. vol.2. p.494.

(2) Cal. of State Papers. (1672) p.611.

(3) Wodrow. vol.2. p.249, and 460.



Afterwards/

Mitchell, "fearing lest faith should not be kept to him, he resiled, and revoked his confession; and it being emitted extrajudicially (not in the presence of a quorum of criminal lords) - it could not bind him, nor be a relevant ground of condemnation"<sup>(1)</sup>

Mitchell was imprisoned, first in Edinburgh Tolbooth and later on the Bass Rock till January, 1678, when his case was again reviewed on the ground that he had, in assaulting a Privy Councillor, broken a statute (then obsolete) of James VI.<sup>(2)</sup> Lauderdale, Rothes and Sharp denied on oath that any promise had been given to make the accused confess and even although Sir George Lockhart, Mitchell's counsel produced a copy of the act, three of the five judges dis-<sup>(3)</sup> allowed his plea that the register should be examined. Lauderdale, indeed, proposed a reprieve but Sharp was inexorable and<sup>(4)</sup> on January, 1678, Mitchell was hanged in the Grassmarket.

Sharp's attitude in the Mitchell episode undoubtedly created

(1) Fountainhall MSS. p.134-8.

(2) Records of the Justiciary Court. (1669-78) vol.2. pps.255-7.

(3) Mathieson. Politics and Religion. vol.2. p.269.

(4) Wodrow. vol.2. p.471.

created/

a bad impression throughout the country, and even today, when men are more tolerant, it is difficult to reconcile Sharp's public policy of oppression with his private virtues and charity save on the grounds of expediency, for it was certainly impossible in those days to carry toleration to any great extent without sacrificing the power and dignity of the new church. Shortly after the Restoration Sharp did intervene with Lauderdale on Guthrie's behalf but finding that the Presbyterians were determined to reward those that were against them as the Lord should give them

(1)  
opportunity, he set his face against compromise and compassion.

He was party to the Privy Council decision of 9th June, 1663, "for we conceive that twenty innocent should be secured than that one guilty person escape", and to innumerable torturings and executions. His conscience he seems to have quieted with liberal gifts to the needy. It is recorded, for instance, that "he hath caused distribute by his trustees, fifty crowns in a morning to the orphans and widows of the presbyterian brethren" and that the daughter of

(1) Keith: Catalogue. Appendix. p.494.

of/

Wariston "was entrusted by him in dispensing no small sums of secret charity to the most needful of that party which differed so much from him"<sup>(1)</sup>. But if in private his conduct proved he had more of real charity and goodness than was expected, Sharp gave in public no sign that the milk of human kindness still welled in his breast.

After Mitchell's death the oppression of the Covenanters continued with Sharp ever in the forefront. On the ground that they had attended conventicles, scores of nonconformists, including James Kirkton<sup>(2)</sup> and his brother-in-law, Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, were seized and kept in prison until heavy fines were paid: many others fled the country to find refuge and religious freedom in Holland. Still not satisfied with these punitive measures, Sharp pressed for greater power and on 20th July, 1676, a royal warrant enabled the Privy Council to proceed with the institution of a "Committee of Public Affairs" which was to consist of the two archbishops, Mar, Argyll, Murray, Linlithgow, Seaforth,

(1) True and Impartial Account. p.78.

(2) Kirkton. p.367.

Seaforth/

Kinghorn, Dundonald, Elphinstone, Lord Privy Seal, the President, Treasurer-Depute, Advocate, Justice Clerk, Lord Collington, or any three of them. The Primate was named as deputy Chairman with full power "to do all things necessary to his majesty's service"<sup>(1)</sup>. That this Committee of Public Affairs went to

work with a will Wodrow affirms and there is evidence to show that many of the prisoners lay for months untried and often forgotten.

"On taking office (a year later) Mackenzie found the jails full of wretches whom Nisbet (Lord Advocate) had left in chains, because he had neither been bribed to prosecute them nor bribed to release them"<sup>(2)</sup>. Such indeed was the increase of conventicles, both in

popularity and in number, and of the friction that accompanied them that Lauderdale determined, if not to excite a rebellion,<sup>(3)</sup> then to adopt measures which he considered likely to produce such a result. By order of the Privy Council the heritors of Ayr and Renfrew were instructed to devise means for curbing conventicles or to submit to their restraint by force; and when they "sincerely

(1) Wodrow. vol.2. p.324.

(2) Ormond: The Lord Advocates. vol.1. p.213.

(3) Burnet. vol.2. p.137.



sincerely/

declared it was not in their power to suppress such

(1)  
conventicles", and suggested a general toleration of Presbyterian-  
ism as the panacea, Lauderdale informed the King that the High-  
land chiefs were ready to march with their redshanks to nip the  
rebellion in the bud, and that he awaited royal instructions. (2)

The royal reply of 11th December imposed martial law on Scotland:

the "Highland Host" was raised; and, despite the representations  
of the Ayrshire heritors that their part of the country was per-  
fectly at peace and free from conventicles, and that the Privy

Council would not send among them "so inhumane and barbarous a

crew", (3) it was instructed by the bishops to "move slowly" (4) against  
the 'rebels'. Though no blood was shed, a contemporary pamphleteer

complained that "many houses were left desolate in a winter flight

and many lost their cattle and horses". (5)

(6)  
These oppressive measures along with the widespread indigna-

tion created by the trial and execution of Mitchell led to a

(1) Wodrow. vol.2. p.400-2.

(2) Mackenzie. Memoirs. p.329.

(3) Wodrow. vol.2. p.388.

(4) Lauderdale Papers. vol.3. p.95.

(5) Hind let loose. p.190-1.

(6) Elder. The Highland Host. pps. 128-132.

a/

new spate of poems, satires and pamphlets which threatened

Sharp and poured contempt on the corruptness of both Church and

(1)

State and it is certain that the writers of those papers cannot

(2)

altogether escape responsibility for the violent death of the

Primate while on his way home to St. Andrews on 3rd May, 1679.

(1) McWard published "The Poor Man's Cup of Cold Water ministered to the Saints and Sufferers for Christ in Scotland" in 1678, and later in the same year, his friend, Brown, the author of "The Apologetical Relation" (1665) produced, "History of the Indulgence".

(2) Mathieson. Politics and Religion in Scotland. vol.2. p.273.

The Murder of Archbishop Sharp.

Although Hume Brown maintains that Sharp's death was unpre-  
 (1)  
 meditated, the evidence of Russell and other zealots who took part  
 in his murder proves that even before Mitchell's execution, Sharp's  
 movements had been watched and that "other worthy Christians had  
 used means to get him upon the road"<sup>(2)</sup>. The excessive severities  
 of Carmichael, the deputy sheriff of Fife, gave cause for a con-  
 spiracy against him and against Sharp who was now regarded as  
 their chief mentor by the Presbyterians: and at an informal gather-  
 ing on 11th April, "all present judged it their duty to hand both  
 (Carmichael and Sharp) over the port, especially the bishop, it  
 being by many of the Lord's people and ministers judged a duty  
 long since not to suffer such a person to live who had shed and  
 was shedding so much of the blood of the saints"<sup>(3)</sup>. Sharp played  
 unwittingly into their hands; for after spending Thursday at a  
 meeting of the Privy Council in Edinburgh, where he laboured hard  
 at his chosen task of drafting penal measures against the Coven-

(1) Hume Brown. History. vol.11. p.321.  
 (2) Russell's Account. Kirkton. p.407-8.  
 (3) Kirkton. p.407.

Covenanters/

he set off for St. Andrews with his daughter, intending to spend a few days at home before carrying the new measures south for the King's sanction. On the Friday evening, travelling with a small retinue in his state coach drawn by six horses, the Primate reached the village of Kennoway where he and his daughter were entertained for the night by Captain Seton. There it was noticed that Sharp ate less than was his custom, "to have been very fervent, and longer than usual in his devotions; as if God, out of his great mercy, had thereby prepared him for what he was to meet with from the worst of men".<sup>(1)</sup>

Meanwhile the conspirators had foregathered on the moor near Gilston before proceeding to the house of a confederate, Robert Black of Baldinny, where they spent the night in prayer and in planning. One search party was dispatched to seek news of Sheriff Carmichael, who had, however, heard rumours of the intended attack and returned to Cupar; while "about midnight two men, well mounted and armed, enquired in the village (Kennoway) if the Archbishop of St.

(1) True and Impartial Account. p.73.



St./

Andrews was not there and receiving an answer in the affirmative, immediately rode away<sup>(1)</sup>. At Baldinny, Mrs. Black sped her parting guests with a kiss and a plea that "if long Leslie (the minister of Ceres) be with him (Sharp) lay him on the green also"<sup>(2)</sup> and the promise was duly given. The party now reformed for action. David Haxton of Rathillet, the one-time favourite and servant of Sharp whose rents he collected<sup>(3)</sup>, was the chosen leader of the band but he stood down on the grounds of conscience and divine revelation in favour of his brother-in-law, John Balfour of Kinloch. The other desperadoes were James Russell of Kettle, George Fleming of Balbuthy, the brothers Alexander and Andrew Henderson of Kilbrachmont, James, Alexander and George Balfour of Gilston, William Dingwall of Caddam, Thomas Ness and Andrew Guillan the weaver in Balmerino.<sup>(4)</sup>

About nine o'clock on Saturday morning Sharp, without any knowledge of the plot, resumed his homeward journey, entertaining

(1) Fanatical Moderation. p.64.

(2) Deposition in Kirkton. p.418.

(3) A True Relation. p.2. (see quotation below)

(4) True and Impartial Account. p.75.

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⌘ "This Haxton was a vile person and had nothing of good in him; or was very scarce admitted to the society of sober men. He was not once only a favourite, but servant of the bishop, having collected part of his rents" - A True Relation.

entertaining/  
 his daughter en route "with many religious discourses,  
 particularly of the vanity of life, the certainty of death, and  
 judgment, of the necessity of faith, good works, repentance  
 and daily growth in grace", <sup>(1)</sup> till they came to a small village  
 called Magus within sight of St. Andrews, where they were over-  
 taken by Balfour and his followers. The Primate had dispensed with  
 his usual retinue on this occasion and seeing no horsemen about  
 the coach, the attackers concluded "according to their frantic  
 enthusiastic notions that God had delivered up their greatest  
 enemy into their hands". <sup>(2)</sup> The fury of the pursuit now drew the  
 Primate's attention and when he perceived the "execrable fanatical  
 assassins", as they were described in the Hue and Cry later,  
 "with pistols in their hands and drawn swords hanging in strings  
 from their arms", <sup>(3)</sup> he urged the coachman to make speed. But his  
 enemies did not yield, pursuing and firing at the coach till at  
 length one of them, named Balfour, who was best mounted, overtook

(1) True and Impartial Account. p.73.

(2) Burnet. vol.1. p.47.

(3) Fanatical Moderation. p.64.

overtook/ (1)  
the coach and by wounding the postilion and shooting the  
horse which he led, hamstringing another, he diverted the coach  
from the road. When the others came up one of them fired a pistol  
at Sharp which burnt his coat and gown but did not enter his body. (2)  
Then they called on him as a "traitorous villain, apostate, and  
Judas" to come forth whereupon "his daughter, alighting out of the  
coach, fell on her knees and with prayers and tears begged her  
father's life, but they threw her down, trampled upon her and  
wounded her". (3) Guillan, who held the horses, was threatened by  
Balfour for trying to intervene on Sharp's behalf. Sharp, with a  
dignity and composure which surprised the assassins, now stepped  
out of the coach and told them calmly that "he did not know he had  
ever injured any of them. If he had, he was ready to make repara-  
tion, beseeching them to spare his life, and he would never  
trouble them for that violence; but prayed them to consider before  
they brought the guilt of innocent blood upon themselves". (4) But

(1) Fanatical Moderation. p.64.

(2) Burnet. vol.1. p.47.

(3) Fanatical Moderation. p.64.

(4) ibid. p.65.



But/

all his entreaties were in vain - one of his assailants almost severed his hand at the wrist with a sword cut while yet another inflicted a heavy gash above Sharp's left eye, whereupon<sup>(1)</sup> the Primate fell to his knees saying, "Gentlemen, it is enough, you have done your work", and holding up his hands as well as he could to heaven, he cried out fervently, "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my soul and receive my spirit". Even as he uttered, "God forgive you as I forgive you all", Balfour smote him on the face and rode him down.<sup>(2)</sup> Supposing Sharp to be dead, the assassins now were moving away when Isabel Sharp, perceiving a gleam in her father's eye, called for the coachman to lift the Archbishop up,<sup>(3)</sup> for there was life in him as yet: whereupon they returned and "gave him divers wounds on the head, some of them to make sure work, stirring his brains in his skull with the points of their swords!"<sup>(4)</sup> (Later a post mortem revealed that Sharp had received a sword cut over the left eye; many cuts on the back of his head with loss of

- (1) True and Impartial Account. p.75.
- (2) Russell's Account. Kirkton. p.418.
- (3) Law. Memoirs. p.147.
- (4) Fanatical Moderation. p.66.



of/  
 brains; one shot wound below the right clavicle; a dagger  
 wound near the kidneys; three wounds on his left hand and one on  
 his right hand.<sup>(1)</sup>

"Though the assassins did not touch his gold nor watch, nor  
 the considerable sum which lay open in the coach - for there was  
 more of bigotry than avarice in that undertaking<sup>(2)</sup>, yet they ransack-  
 ed the luggage in the coach and rifled his pockets. There they  
 discovered some state papers and a bible along with a case of  
 pistols, some nail parings, and a few strands of worsted and silk  
 which probably belonged to his daughter, and lastly, a tobaccobox  
 out of which flew a humming bee which either Haxton or Balfour  
 called his 'familiar'.<sup>(3)</sup> As the assassins fled from the scene of  
 their crime, they met one of the Archbishop's servants returning  
 from a courtesy call to meet his master's coach. Him they dis-  
 mounted and drove away his horse, leaving the man along with his  
 fellows to look after the body of the Primate,<sup>(4)</sup> while they rode  
 away to hold a prayer meeting before separating. News of the

(1) The Spirit of Popery. p.58.

(2) True Account of the Horrid Murder. p.6.

(3) Kirkton. p.421.

the/  
murder was quickly taken to St. Andrews whence the Primate's  
body was conveyed with almost regal splendour later in the day.

Sunday, 4th May, saw an extraordinary meeting of the Privy  
Council to set in motion machinery for the capture of Sharp's  
murderers. Depositions were made by the Archbishop's daughter and  
servants who had witnessed the tragedy and a courier sent gallop-  
ing south to inform the King. A proclamation was issued "for  
the discovery of the murderers of Archbishop Sharp", offering  
10,000 merks for the apprehension of the suspects and requiring  
the heritors and masters of Fife to bring their tenants, cottars  
(1)  
and servants for interview to certain named centres; later in the  
week the Council banned travelling with arms without a license and  
instructed the sheriff-deputies of Fife to scrutinise the church  
rolls and examine all who could not produce satisfactory evidence  
of their whereabouts on the morning of the murder. The King gave  
his royal approval to those measures, which caused great hardship  
and inconvenience for many innocent people, in a letter to the

(1) Wodrow. vol.3. p.53.

the/

Privy Council. "It was with no less abhorrence than surprizal that in your letter of the 4th we received account of that cruel and barbarous murder committed the day before by ten frantic ruffians on the late Archbishop of St. Andrews within two miles of that place and we highly commend and return you our hearty thanks for your great care and forwardness to take the most effectual course for discerning and apprehending those barbarous assassinated<sup>(1)</sup>

In spite of all the proclamations, inspections, arrests and persecutions "it is certain that none of the Archbishop's murderers, save Haxton of Rathillet and Andrew Guillian, perished by the hand of the executioner"<sup>(2)</sup>. Dingwall fell at Drumclog while Balfour and Russell, after taking part in the Bothwell Rising, escaped to Holland and the nature of their deaths is unknown.

Haxton, captured after Bothwell Brig, was executed with the utmost severity of the law<sup>(3)</sup> and Guillian, who had taken little share in the affair, after his seizure in 1683 was executed at Edinburgh and

(1) Calendar of State Papers. (1679/80) p.141.

(2) Kirkton. p.401.

(3) Wodrow. vol.3. p.223.

and/<sup>(1)</sup>  
his dismembered body hung up in chains on Magus Moor.

While Sharp's murder caused general consternation throughout the country, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that his death<sup>(1)</sup> was accompanied by widespread regret. "It struck all people with horror, and softened his enemies into some tenderness: so that his memory was treated with decency by those who had very little respect for him during his life"<sup>(2)</sup>. Certainly no expense was spared in the funeral arrangements "which were performed after a most sumptuous and magnificent manner on the 17th of that same month"<sup>(3)</sup>

From the Abbey a grand procession headed by sixty-one old men, (corresponding to the years of the defunct's age) each in mourning hoods and cloaks and carrying the arms of the Archiepiscopal see, accompanied the coffin to the place of burial. All the high dignitaries of church and state attended in full regalia - officials and members of the Privy Council and the nobility, the magistrates of Edinburgh and St. Andrews, Professors of the University along

(1) Fountainhall MSS. Lauder. Hist. Notices. 1. p.447.

(2) Burnet. vol.1. p.47.

(3) True and Impartial Account. p.82.



along/  
 with the episcopal hierarchy - even the bloody gown which  
 Sharp had worn on the fateful day was carried by a chaplain in  
 the procession. The Archbishop of Glasgow was Master of Ceremonies  
 and after Dr. Paterson, the Bishop of Edinburgh had preached the  
 funeral sermon, the body was lowered into the grave with the  
 sound of trumpets. (1) Sharp was buried in the south-east end of the  
 High Church of St. Andrews where his only son, William Sharp of  
 Scot's Craig, erected a stately tomb over him. (2) The monument, in  
 white marble, represented the Primate at prayer and below the  
 kneeling figure was a carving of the scene on Magus Moor and a  
 grandiloquent Latin inscription composed by Sharp's friend, the  
 Bishop of Dunkeld. When at a later date, the High Church was  
 restored to the Presbyterians, the monument was allowed to remain  
 and to this day marks the last resting place of James Sharp,  
 Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of all Scotland.

(1) Stephen's Life.p.621-3.

(2) True and Impartial Account. p.82.

B I B L I O G R A P H YA. PRIMARY AUTHORITIES.

1. Manuscripts.
2. Printed Letters.
3. Pamphlets of the Period. (a) referring to Sharp.  
(b) General.
4. Contemporary Documents, Acts, Minutes, etc.
5. Diaries and Histories of the Times.

B. SECONDARY AUTHORITIES.

1. Ecclesiastical History.
  2. General History of the Period.
  3. Miscellaneous Works. (a) Articles  
(b) Works.
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A. PRIMARY AUTHORITIES.

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Criminal letters against the alleged murderers of Archbishop Sharp. Fol. 33. No. 48.

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B E8. d.18.

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